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Davy Doon's Big Bounce: Or, NICKEL NELL, The Boy Spotter's Mascot.



THE BOY SPOTTER SAW THE MAN JOINED BY ANOTHER PERSON WHEN HE REACHED THE CORNER.

Davy Doon's Big Bounce;
OR,
NICKEL NELL,
THE BOY SPOTTER'S MASCOT.

BY T. C. HARBAUGH.

CHAPTER I.

THE MISSING WITNESS.

"THAT's all O. K., I guess. What do you think of it, Nell?"

"It looks square enough. I see you have dotted your i's and crossed your t's. But you can't depend on everything Mr. Brass tells you."

"You can't, eh? Well, you know more about him than I do. I never did like the cut of his jib; but then, you see, Nell, if we begin to find fault with people we won't know where to stop."

The girl, who was handsome though not very well clad, glanced at the paper she held in her hand and suddenly lifted her eyes to the watchful boy in the chair before her.

"I will try it, anyhow. It may be the last chance and Mr. Brass seems to think a good deal of you, Davy, and—"

"He pretends to, at any rate, whether he does or not. He told me the night I stopped the horses that were about to run over him that whenever he could do me a favor he would cheerfully do it. Now we shall see, Nell."

Dave Doon, a young character well known outside the narrow world he inhabited in a not very stylish part of New York City, picked up a letter which lay on the table and holding it up to his companion, said:

"Here is something that sets me thinking. It is the strangest matter you ever heard of, Nell. I expect you will hardly believe the story of how it fell into my hands."

"I don't know," said Nickel Nell.

"Well, I was out last night and came across an old woman who had no place to sleep. She was wandering about the streets and was about to throw up the sponge when I met her. She was crippled, and walked with a cane which had been her friend—probably the best one she has had—for years. She came to this city to find one Hiram Honeybee, a man who some years ago signed her husband's will. This man, Honeybee, was a queer customer who took freaks which led him from home. When he signed the will all parties were living in Jersey, on the west side, and were prosperous people.

The husband of the old woman took sick and died; but first, he made a will in which he left a good deal of money and property to a grand-niece who is now a young lady. The will vanished soon after old Mr. Lane's death and could not be found. His wife remembered that he had made one; also that Hiram Honeybee a neighbor had signed it. All at once, but a long time after Mr. Lane's death, another will was produced and it left the grand-niece very little money at all, giving the bulk of the stuff to one Natty, a man who lives in this city or did six months ago, in the height of style. Old Mrs. Lane fought the will as not being genuine, but what could she do without Hiram Honeybee's testimony? That man had disappeared. He hasn't been seen for nearly three years and here old Mrs. Lane is, homeless, in this big city looking for him among a million strangers. That's the story in brief, Nell, and you would have cried if you could have heard her pitiful story."

"Where is she now?"

"She promised to come back here to-night and I have put a curtain across the room, as you see, for her accommodation. She don't care about going to a lodging

house nor to one of the Homes for the Friendless, for the Lanes used to be a little stuck-up, and I promised to give her shelter here. She left me this letter which is nothing more than a memorandum of what she thinks she can prove by Hiram Honeybee. She'd be all O. K. if she could find Hiram, but you see no one knows where he is, and that's the puzzle. She is sure the will which took the money from her and the grand-niece was a clear forgery, but you see there is the missing Hiram Honeybee! He is the missing link and as such may have rotted in his grave long ago."

Nickel Nell was silent and her lustrous eyes seemed to get a moisture which Davy did not fail to notice.

"I will come back to-night and see what Mrs. Lane looks like. I think I can give her a little better place and, then, I like old people. They remind me of my own dear parents who were carried off by the fever. Yes, I almost like Mrs. Lane already."

"You're all O. K., Nell," cried Davy. "If she comes back, I will see that she is detained for you."

Carrying the letter of introduction which the boy had written on the strength of Bolivar Brass's promise, Nell went below and threaded the mazes of the street until she reached a building which had a business look.

For a moment her heart seemed to fail her, but she went in and drew aside in the hall to let several persons pass.

She could hear voices which seemed to come from a room alongside the corridor and all at once she started and nearly dropped Davy's letter.

"I didn't expect to hear him in this building!" she said half aloud to herself. "I wonder if he comes here very often? Maybe he has business with Mr. Brass and—"

At that moment the door near by opened and a young man with a red face and a waxed mustache came out and started toward the door.

Nell hugged the wall as she with difficulty suppressed an exclamation of alarm and with all eyes and trembling—she could not help it—she eyed him as he walked along.

By a miracle he passed without noticing her, and the next moment she drew a long breath of relief when she saw him vanish.

"Thank heaven! I am glad he didn't see me. He has persecuted me often enough and if I thought he was on familiar terms with Mr. Brass, I wouldn't go another step further."

But, she went on and timidly opened a door which stood ajar.

She found herself in a room which contained, among other things, a desk and a safe.

At the latter sat a man with high shoulders and a slim body.

His back was turned toward Nickel Nell as she entered, but the moment he heard her step he turned and awaited her pleasure, looking over the rim of his silver spectacles as if he were a vulture and she legitimate prey.

It was Bolivar Brass, a man who was called a lawyer though he was not recognized by the profession on account of certain traits which will come out in the course of our story.

Nell approached when Bolivar suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh, I see. It's you, is it? Well, have you the recommendation you spoke of?"

He held out his hand and Nell extended the paper.

In another instant he had read it and burst into a laugh.

"Why, it's from the boy who thinks he saved me from the horses some weeks ago, I see!" he cried. "Well, he takes upon himself a good deal of liberty, I think. I may have promised to do him a favor; I don't know what I really did—I was ex-

cited you know. But I—I—can't give you the place."

Nickel Nell said nothing. Her thoughts had gone back to the young man she had seen quitting the office and she had resolved not to press her claims.

"Can you write a good hand?" suddenly asked Brass.

"I think it is fair," was the reply.

"We'll see," and he wheeled his chair round to the desk and opened it.

Nell saw him lift from it some papers secured with a rubber band and taking one at random from the package he opened it and motioned the girl forward.

"Sit down here and copy a little!" he went on. "I may need a copyist as business is looking up and I have an important matter on my hands."

Nickel Nell obeyed and, pen in hand, was ready to show her skill.

Leaning over her with his sharp nose nearly touching her ear, Bolivar Brass, planting one of his attenuated fingers upon the paper, drawled out:

"Begin there and copy say about six lines. Let's see what you can do. I'm a generous man and if I did promise to do the boy a favor, why, by Jupiter! I'll do it."

Nell looked at the sheet covered with scrawly lines and when the man's finger was removed she dipped her pen into the ink.

The place designated was the beginning of a paragraph and the first word startled her.

It was a name she had just heard from Davy's lips.

Hiram Honeybee!

The girl's hand shook so that she could hardly hold the pen, and fearing to begin with the quiver upon her she took a long breath and fell back a little.

"What's the matter?" demanded Bolivar Brass. "You look as though you saw a ghost's face on that paper. By Jehu! you're all in a tremble. What is it, I say?"

He was leaning down and his eyes were fastened on the paragraph which had whitened Nell's face.

"Oh! I see! I didn't intend to give you that piece of paper. I came across it at random; but, why should it affect you that way?"

Nell forgot herself.

"Why, don't you see that's the name of Hiram Honeybee, the missing witness?" she cried, looking up into the man's face.

"The missing witness of what?" was the quick retort. "Seems to me you're meddling with somebody's business. I guess I don't want a copyist of that sort. But, look here. You don't want to tell anything outside of this house. If you do you will wish you had never seen the light of day! Do you hear that? You may go now."

Nell shrunk from that face as she would have shrunk from the Evil One.

A moment later she stood on the sidewalk with a tremor of fear at her heart and strange wonderment in her large blue eyes.

CHAPTER II.

THE WOMAN WITH THE CANE.

WHEN Nickel Nell gained the sidewalk the last bit of daylight had departed and the lamps of New York threw their gleams on street and pavement.

In another part of the city at that very hour stood an old woman waiting for the string of vehicles that blocked the crossing for a little time to pass and let her over.

This creature was a remarkable person in looks.

She did not appear like a beggar, though her face was wan and her garments none of the best.

There was a look of refinement in her deeply sunken gray eyes, and she appeared as one who had suffered in some way, mentally or physically.

In one hand she carried a cane, such as

cripples use, and this supported her while she waited for the vehicles to pass.

All at once she uttered a cry and staggered back, at the same time glaring at a young man who had come up at that moment.

"My God! I wonder when he came to the city?" she exclaimed. "That is Van Kinder and no mistake! I haven't seen him for nearly three years; but, I can't be mistaken."

Meantime the vehicles had separated for a moment and the person she had spied was about to cross the street.

He was a cold-faced but handsome man of perhaps thirty and his mustache was carefully waxed.

The old woman sprung after him and grabbed his sleeve.

Irritated by the act, the man turned and looked at her as if he was about to resent her touch despite her sex.

"Where did you spring from, Van Kinder?" she cried, holding on to him though he seemed anxious to get away.

"What's that? Van Kinder, eh? Who are you talking to? Do you know, old woman?"

"I guess I know else I wouldn't be holding onto your sleeve. You are Van Kinder, once of Pascal Point and—"

"By Jove! that's a good one for the chappies at the club," he interrupted. "Van Kinder of Pascal Point did you say? I ought to give you a dollar for that."

"I don't want your money. I have given you your true name; I don't care what they call you here in New York. What are you doing here, I say?"

"Just as if it was some of your business. I don't know you; never saw you before today and I am obliged to bid you good-night. My name is Jason."

"It may be now, but when you were a rollicking boy at Pascal Point and before you fell among bad company it was Van Kinder. You don't look like you did once. You look like a young vulture in good feathers. Where do you get them, Van?"

He broke away from her and bolted across the street.

"I'm going to follow him for he might know something of Hiram Honeybee, and she started after him.

The young man was nimble-footed, but the woman, crippled in her limbs, found herself stranded in the middle of the street with a heavy Express wagon approaching her at sharp speed.

Bewildered by the sight new to her, she stopped and seemed ready to sink fainting before the hoofs of the team.

The young man turned and saw her peril. Did he rush to her relief?

Not at all!

He had plenty of time to run back and snatch her from beneath the horses' hoofs, but he grinned maliciously instead and muttered something which was not overheard.

The old lady felt weak and more than helpless.

The man on the seat driving the heavy wagon did not seem to notice her peril or else he cared little for what he was about to do.

On he came.

All at once, as if goaded by some sudden impulse, the woman raised her cane, and, just as the horses seemed about to trample her underfoot, she delivered a terrific blow upon the head of one and sent him back with a snort of pain.

She had more power in that arm than the breathless spectators imagined.

She delivered another blow and this threw the team back and let her pass on.

A slight cheer greeted her action, and throwing a look at the Jehu on the seat she muttered something about "self-protection" and turned again toward the opposite sidewalk.

In a moment as it were she had extricated herself from imminent danger and when she

reached the sidewalk she looked about for Van Kinder, but he was gone.

"I was stopped too long by that wagon," she said. "Maybe I have lost him for good, but I don't know! I will tell my story to the sharp-eyed boy, Davy Doon, who gave me a bed last night. He may know the man, or find him again for me," and she walked off, none the worse for her adventure save a tremor which swept her frame whenever she recurred to it and realized her narrow escape.

She had to stop and ask a policeman the way to a certain street and when she had been set right she hurried off and in time gained the stairway leading to Davy Doon's abode.

The door of the boy's room was locked when she reached it, and she was about to turn away when she heard footsteps come up the steps.

"Aren't you Mrs. Lane?" was asked, as a young girl came into view.

"That's my name, but who told you?"

"Davy was talking about you and I thought you were the lady. I am Nell."

"You are? Only Nell?"

"Nickel Nell they sometimes call me because I used to sell Sunday papers, though I don't do that any more. I have just come back from a wild goose chase," and here Nell smiled. "Is the door locked? I guess I know how to open it. I am Davy's friend and he let me into the secret of the hiding-place of the key."

Nell looked in a place in the hall where no one else would have looked and found a key which fitted the lock; and opening the door, she ushered Mrs. Lane, the cripple, into the boy's room.

As the old lady took a chair a sudden faintness overcame her and if she had not dashed her hand into a pitcher of water she would have succumbed.

"I nearly lost my life," she explained to Nell whose eyes were full of wonderment. "I am on a strange hunt in this great city and everything seems against me. I have suffered more injustice than tongue can tell, and the hand of a villain is at work at this very moment. I had to save myself to-night and it is pretty hard to see standing within saving distance of you a man who ought to have risked his life for you. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, that is very strange," said Nell.

"Van Kinder would have let me die there," Mrs. Lane went on. "He told me that his name was Jason and not Kinder—"

Nickel Nell started with a sudden cry.

"Jack Jason?" she exclaimed. "Was that his name?"

"I don't think he said it was Jack Jason; but it was Jason, anyway."

"I know him!"

In an instant Mrs. Lane's hand was clutching Nell's arm and her eyes seemed to look her through.

"Do you know him? Where does he live and what does he do?" When did you see him last?"

"He came out of Bolivar Brass's office when I went down there for work. I hugged the wall so as not to be seen by him and he did pass me by without noticing me sure enough. I have known him for some time, but I have never tried to find out where he lives."

"He lied to me—deliberately lied; but then, that is nothing new for him, for, as a boy, he was a superb liar," smiled Mrs. Lane. "Do you know what I am after? I am trying to find Hiram Honeybee, the man who signed the only will my husband ever made. I don't care what the courts say. Did the boy tell you this?"

Nell replied that Davy had said something about a will, but she had not paid much attention to him.

"I have spent what little was left me in trying to right this infamous wrong. I

don't know what ever became of Hiram Honeybee. Something tells me that he is dead, but somehow or other I can't believe it. It seems to me that he must be un-earthed. The last I ever heard of him was that he was seen in New York by one of our neighbors, but that is a very poor clue. Your friend Davy admits that it is, but he has promised to help me and we may succeed with God's help and right the monstrous wrong which gave my husband's wealth to one who did not deserve it."

While Mrs. Lane talked, with her eyes full of fire and her hands shaking on the edge of the table, Nickel thought of her interview with Bolivar Brass.

The last words of the old fleecer still echoed in her ears, but now they inflamed her cheeks with rage.

"I'll tell you a secret, Mrs. Lane. I am not permitted to breathe it on pain of death, but I think it belongs to you. Within the last two hours I have seen the name of Hiram Honeybee written upon a sheet of paper."

This seemed too much for the witness-hunter.

All at once Mrs. Lane came toward Nickel Nell and with a singular cry tried to embrace her; but in the effort lost consciousness, and sunk in a swoon at her feet.

Nell with a shriek sprung up and stood in the middle of the room, white-faced and terribly frightened.

CHAPTER III.

DAVY'S SEWER TRAIL.

DAVY DOON was something of a ferret inasmuch as he had been the means of tracking down several men who robbed a small bank in the city and from this act he had branched out as one ready to do detective work on his own hook.

He was born in the city "in the shadow of the old 'Bend,'" as he expressed it.

The tough portions of New York City were known to him even down to the dark back alleys, and instead of going to live, as he had been requested to do, where he would be near those who would sometimes need his shrewdness on short notice, he preferred to dwell in the room where we have introduced him.

His acquaintance with Nickel Nell, the waif, dated back some distance beyond the date of the opening of our story.

He and Nell, from force of circumstances if from nothing else, had become fast friends and the girl thought "all the world" of Davy.

When the Boy Spotter heard Mrs. Lane's story for the first time he became her champion and had promised to take up her hunt for Hiram Honeybee, though he could not help acknowledging the almost hopelessness of finding the trail after so long a time had elapsed.

It was a cold trail and Davy knew it.

"It may be a long chase and I may get into a pickle by taking it but I believe the old lady's story to be true and she has no friends to help her. I am going to be her friend, and though she may never be in a situation to pay me, I will take the case anyhow."

Such were his words when he found himself alone after listening to the rather startling story she had told.

The Boy Spotter was right.

It was to be a long and a dangerous chase. If he could have looked into the future and foreseen the adventures which were destined to chase each other across the chess-board of time he might have faltered, but we think not.

It was the night after the events we have detailed in the foregoing chapters and Davy dodged into the shadows of Gotham Court for a purpose,

He had reached home in time to find a freshly written note on his table saying that Nell had taken Mrs. Lane to her quarters which were somewhat better than his and he felt that the old lady would be safe there and feel more at home with one of her own sex.

On the night in question the boy detective had come to Gotham Court for the purpose of carrying out a plan which he had thought out some time before.

He gained a spot of ground known as Double Alley.

This is nothing less than the covering of an immense sewer which was then the run for criminals and desperate characters in general who doging down a man-hole or running through a dark cellar could drop into the sewer and thus escape the police.

Davy was not seen to enter Gotham Court nor to approach Double Alley and when he stopped it was at a door which opened when he rapped.

He slid across the threshold and stood against a wall with one hand behind him while he watched the person who had let him into the house.

There was a poor light in the chamber and the young detective smiled when he saw the little man come forward and look into his face with a leer.

"Well, what you want?" was the question that met the boy.

"I want to go down into the sewer."

The man seemed to draw back for a moment and shook his head.

"What do you want down in the sewer?"

"I want to go down—that's all, Muzzles."

If this man's name was Muzzles, it fitted him to a T, for there were scars on his face which looked like the muzzle used to render cross dogs harmless and in the light these scars seemed to glow like red-hot irons.

"Will you come up this way?" he asked.

"That depends, Muzzles."

"Come, then."

Spotter Davy was led across the room and the little man opened a door with a key which he took from his pocket. This admitted the pair to a cellar across which they went and in one corner Muzzles lifted a trap.

A strong, damp, disagreeable smell came up.

"You'll want a light," said the man. "Here, take my lantern."

He handed Davy a lantern which he took from a nail in the wall, and, lighting it, the boy detective stepped into the hole and going down six short steps landed on the floor of the big sewer.

It was large enough for a man to walk through without stooping.

Its floor of flags had been trodden by many feet of crime, and the young on his-own-hook detective went down through the darkness feeling now and then on his feet the rats that infested the place.

Every once in a while he would stop and strike at the foes he barely saw as they flitted out of sight and when he seemed to have reached his journey's end he leaned toward one of the sewer walls and listened.

He was underneath the city.

A noise as of distant water and now and then the distant puffing of river craft came to his ears.

Davy emerged in an alley which was as dark as the one where he had entered the sewer.

He pulled his body up through a man-hole and went toward a house.

This time he did not knock, but opened the door and blowing out his lantern entered.

"Hello!" said a voice as he entered the room. "If you don't stop and give an account of yourself I will blow you to Davy Jones's locker."

Davy Doon smiled at these words and

whispering his name heard a laugh at which he moved forward again.

A human figure rose before him—a man who could not have stood erect if he tried, filled an old arm-chair. He was past fifty and his face was covered with hair.

His arms were long, and hanging to the chair ready for his hands was a revolver which he had lowered only when the boy mentioned his name.

"You don't come by the street, I hope," he said as he watched the young sewer-runner.

"No, I came over the rat-walk," was the reply.

"You haven't been here for some time. I am glad to see you. You know I don't see many people, shut up as I am from the world I will never again enjoy. Do I look like I was nearer the grave than when you saw me last? Take the light and look for yourself."

The boy did so. He held the light close to the face, and while the eyes blinked like an owl's, he surveyed the features before him.

"You're good for years yet," he declared.

"That's flattery; but, no difference, boy," was the answer. "What's up?"

"I want to ask you a question."

"Is that what brought you to me to-night, Davy?"

"Partly."

"Well, what is your question?" and the man fell back in the arm-chair and looked at the boy with resignation.

Davy did not delay.

"Look here, Captain Paul: what became of Hiram Honeybee?"

A queer question to be asked in that place, at that hour and of that man.

It seemed to fall upon him like a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky, and for a moment he did not move, but sat bold upright, looking at the questioner with fox-like eyes that were almost lost in the depths of his head.

"You're crazy!" he cried suddenly. "What should I, who have not seen the sunshine for nearly two years, know of what became of the man you call Hiram Honeybee?"

"I know just how long you have been here, Captain Paul, but I want my question answered all the same."

"You young rogue you! Do you want to get me into trouble? I know that sometimes you help the police, and I haven't been the best of men in my time, and they hold a grudge against me. I don't know what became of Hiram Honeybee."

The words were spoken with drooping eyes and the young detective noted it.

Davy said nothing for a moment.

"You knew a man by that name, didn't you?" he said at last.

"I?"

"Yes. Come, Captain Paul, why don't you unseal your lips and tell me all? How do I know that you knew Hiram Honeybee? Pardon me but it was an accidental discovery. You know that three months ago you gave me some papers to keep for you. You thought they weren't safe in this trap. Well, this morning when I went to look for them—"

"They were stolen?" interrupted the man.

"No, the rats had been to them. They had eaten the strings and gnawed the papers to some extent. I happened to see a name on one of them while tying them up again; I could not help it, Captain Paul. It was the name of Hiram Honeybee."

The man in the chair looked again at his little friend, and then threw out one hand.

"You can never find him," he exclaimed. "Hiram Honeybee is dead! There! don't ask me another question," and the lips shut like a vise behind the dread reply.

CHAPTER IV.

SOMEWHAT STARTLING.

HIRAM HONEYBEE is dead!"

It is no wonder that the Boy Spotter fell back with a half suppressed cry.

Was it true? Was the missing witness—the man so eagerly sought by Mrs. Lucy Lane—no longer among the living?

Had he (Davy) taken up the trail too late to be of any benefit to the poor woman and to justice?

He looked at the man in the chair and watched the strange play of light and shadow in his hair-covered face until he continued:

"I have told you all I can tell you. Did you bring me the papers which the rats had mutilated? No? Why didn't you? I'll bet my head you read them every one."

"I did not read one of them, Captain Paul. I tied them up as well as I could and put them in another place where the rats cannot find them. They are safe now."

"That is good. I believe you are a boy of your word, Davy. Though I can't reward you, some day perhaps you will be rewarded. But you came to me with a singular question."

"I thought you would consider it so. I want to know what became of Hiram Honeybee and I can't get it through me that he is dead, for, living, he would be of such great help to a woman who has been cruelly and terribly wronged."

Captain Paul did not ask who that woman was as Detective Davy thought he would but sat still and blinked his eyes.

"I guess I'll go back," said the boy.

"Over the rat-run?"

"Yes."

"Aren't you afraid?"

"No. There are some large ones there but the light seems to keep them off."

Davy went to the door, watched all the time by the half-buried eyes and when he had seized the latch the man spoke.

"Why do you want to know what became of Hiram Honeybee, Davy?"

The boy investigator turned and moved across the floor toward Captain Paul.

"I will tell you. That man put his name to a will and the will was stolen. I say so from what I have heard from the lips of a truthful woman. Another will has come forward and it was accepted as the true one. It is claimed that the names to that last will were forged—that Hiram Honeybee could expose the whole fraud and break up the nest of fleecers and villains. But you see he can't be found. He went away soon after the first will was written and since that day, he has been seen only once."

All this time the occupant of the arm-chair was watching Davy like a hawk. He seemed to be drinking in with interest every word as it fell from the boy's lips.

"Wheel my chair to yon wall, Davy, boy," he said at last.

Davy sprung to obey and pushed the chair across the floor.

"Now, turn your back to me a minute, please."

The boy detective obeyed again.

It seemed to him that he heard a door open in the wall—at least it sounded like that to him but he was not sure.

He wanted to look, but dared not.

"All right now, boy," was what he heard, and the next moment he turned again and looked at the man.

"I don't see why I should not go on and tell you everything," the invalid continued.

"Do I look like a man who is near death?"

"No. I have told you that once before to-night. I can't see anything desperate in your case, Captain Paul. I—"

"Don't touch me!" cried the man, as he seemed to shiver with a sudden paroxysm of pain. "I am nearer death than you imagine. This visit and the attending shock have been too much for me. I am actually dying now."

"You have taken poison, Captain Paul?" cried Davy, springing toward the man, but only to be waved off with a look.

"What if I have?" was the answer, accompanied by a grim smile. "I have lived

oo long already. We were talking about Hiram Honeybee, weren't we?"

"Yes, yes—"

"I recollect. There, don't try to lift me. Let me slip down, down if I will."

Davy Doon was horrified.

The look which had come into the man's eyes was enough to terrify any one, and he saw that the invalid was slipping, slowly slipping from the chair inch by inch.

"I will run for a doctor. I don't want you to die, Captain Paul, with the secret in your heart. It will never do, and if you could hear poor Mrs. Lane tell the story—"

"Let me do the talking!" broke in Captain Paul. "I am the one who should do it here and at this time. You want to keep still and use your ears—that's all."

The boy detective stared but said nothing.

The man gasped and after a moment of spasm went on:

"Yes, yes. I will go back to the beginning. No, I can't do that, for I won't have time. The will, did you say? The one that was admitted after the fight in the courts? They never found Hiram Honeybee, I believe. Well, I should say not!"

Davy, watching the face with more eagerness than ever, saw it change color again.

"I fear you must hurry up, Captain Paul!" he suddenly cried, warned by the increasing pallor.

"Do you, Davy? Well, I will."

There was another moment of silence. It seemed an hour to the expectant boy.

"He came to this city. He got a letter to come, Hiram did. It was soon after the will was made. He signed it with his own hand. That was just what he did. This man, Hiram Honeybee, was a queer stick and gave us lots of trouble; but we didn't let him have his own way altogether. One night—yes, it was after dark—I recollect it just as well as if it happened last night—Wait! I feel something at my heart."

Davy waited.

He saw Captain Paul place his hand upon his bosom and breathe very hard. Once more he slipped. He was lying almost wholly on the floor, and his aspect was one of impending death.

He did not continue.

"Go on, Captain Paul! You haven't much time left!" cried the excited boy.

"What, not much time? Well, I can't say that I am sorry. They would drag me into court if I survived and I can't—no! I can't say anything more!"

The sound of the last words sent a nameless thrill through the boy's frame.

He saw the lips remain open at the end of the sentence. He saw the hands of Captain Paul slip to the sides of the chair and when he bent forward he saw that the man was dead!

"This is most disastrous to our cause," he cried, standing spell-bound by the dead man and looking down into his rigid face. "This man knew something about the plot against Mrs. Lane and her grand-niece. He would have been as good a witness almost as Hiram Honeybee. But, he will never complete that confession and I must rely on the half-eaten papers in my care. I will look through this old shanty first. I will see what it hides, for this man was in the plot though I would never have suspected it but for the rats. Captain Paul has hidden from the officers for months though they did not particularly want him. Now they will never need him."

Davy turned away and went to the wall at the spot whither he had wheeled Captain Paul at his request.

He held his light so as to let it fall upon the plastering.

He found the door which the man must have opened while his back was turned.

It contained several small vials one of which was uncorked and empty.

This told the story of the tragic death.

As the niche revealed nothing more, the boy ferret went to another part of the room where stood an old bureau, the drawers of which seemed to invite investigation.

He found them locked and thinking that the key would be found in Captain Paul's pockets he went back to the dead.

In another moment he was bending over the body and was rifling the pockets.

A bunch of keys was found and with a smile of triumph Davy returned to the bureau.

The first key was the very one he wanted, and he opened the top drawer. But he found it empty; after which he unlocked drawer after drawer to be greeted with the same state of nothingness!

It was very provoking and made the boy detective shake his head as he discovered that he was losing time.

"I will look through the captain's clothes. He may carry the secret there," he thought. "I must have the secret he would have told perhaps if he had lived."

Once more he went back to the dead, and, just as he was stooping over the body, a door opened!

"You young rascal, if you touch that man I will paint the wall with your brains!"

The Boy Spotter started up with a quick cry of horror.

He was covered by a revolver gripped by a strange hand!

CHAPTER V.

"GET OUT OF HERE!"

DAVY DOON stood nonplussed for a moment and at the same time tried to make out the real look in the eyes that regarded him with the anger of a fiend's.

The man at the door was short-set and vicious-looking.

His face was partly covered by a brownish beard which, being stubby, rendered his appearance more repulsive looking than ever and he seemed for all the world like some tramp on a mission of lawlessness.

Davy stared at the man with fear and trembling, for his words told that he was desperate, and the leveled revolver said so in something more startling than words.

The boy fell back without touching the dead man. He turned toward the person at the door and exclaimed:

"I suppose you want to rifle the dead. If that is your intention there is the body."

"Get out yourself, then!" but first, turn your pockets wrong-side out."

Still covered by the weapon the boy obeyed and then stood motionless in the middle of the room.

"You haven't anything contraband, I see. Now, get out and make yourself as scarce as possible about these premises."

Five minutes later the young spotter stood on the sidewalk with the wind that came from the nearest river fanning his face.

"I wonder who that man was?" thought Davy. "He took things very cool, and evidently knows just how to play his hand. He has a face entirely strange to me and I think I saw it for the first time to-night. The beard seemed natural, but it may have been false. I wonder how he came to know Captain Paul, and why he thought I had robbed the dead? Robbed him of what?" and Detective Davy looked about him as if he heard a footprint on the pave.

He watched the old house for a few moments, but seeing no one come forth he started off and in a short time was lost to view among the darker and dilapidated buildings.

The young detective went home, the adventure worrying him not a little.

Captain Paul was dead and he had died with an important secret but quarter revealed.

"I can look at the papers now," cried Davy. "The ones he left with me for safe-keeping fall to me, now that their owner is

dead. I hope the rats haven't found them again. But, I will determine that in a little while."

He opened a drawer in a bureau that stood against the wall and the next moment withdrew his arm with an exclamation of astonishment.

"I certainly put them here when I took them away from the rats," he avowed. "I laid them in this corner," and he looked, but saw nothing like a package tied with a yellow string.

The mystery of the missing papers seemed as deep as the secret which had died on Captain Paul's lips.

As Detective Davy looked into the drawer, he felt the blood mount to his temples, and then he seemed to turn pale.

"Mrs. Lane is right. There is a big conspiracy on foot, and the scoundrels are at work. They are playing a hand to keep back from those who ought to know the truth about that will. They know what became of Hiram Honeybee, and here I am fighting a league of desperate men."

Yes, the papers were gone, and though the boy ransacked the drawer they were not to be discovered and he turned away at last with a sigh accompanied by a look of determination which told his true feelings.

"I recollect what Nell told me after her visit to Bolivar Brass's office," he suddenly cried. "When she went to copy something from a document for the purpose of giving the old man a sample of her penmanship she saw therein the name of Hiram Honeybee. What did it mean and why was it there?"

Davy went to a chair and threw himself upon it.

A cheap clock over his head ticked away in a sort of sing-song way that, while not melodious had never grown monotonous to him. He looked up and consulted it a moment and then got up.

"I might discover something in that direction," said he aloud. "I have a pull with old Brass, the lawyer, and he won't refuse to see me for I did him a favor when the horses were about to trample him under foot."

The boy investigator in a few minutes was on his way to the lawyer's office.

Bolivar Brass, as we have said, was not recognized as a lawyer by the other members of the profession. He was noted for tricks which the honest guild did not countenance, and there were few he would not resort to if he thought they would further his cause and help him to some desired end.

He had made money—made it "hand over fist," as the saying goes. He had fleeced a great many people and was fleecing them still; he was by profession a fleecer, a despicable character.

He had lived in his little office for years, and as he had no family he took his meals at a cheap restaurant in the immediate vicinity of the place so that his figure was one of the best known on the street.

The young detective reached the building, and after a look into the hallway, always open, went up the first flight.

He found his way to the old man's door and there stopped short for a placard was there and bending nearer it he read:

"Out of Town."

Won't be Back for Ten Days."

"That's rather sudden seems to me," thought Davy, as he read the announcement again and again. "He was here not long ago when Nell swooped down upon him with the letter of introduction which he might have honored if she had not seen Hiram Honeybee's name on the paper. Can it be that Bolivar Brass knows something about this matter—that he is in the secret of the missing witness? I wouldn't put it past him, but here he is out of town and I

am balked. You won't be back inside of ten days, eh?" and he looked at the placard for the twentieth time. "I would like to know if this was a very sudden move or whether it would have been taken if Nell had not visited you?"

Davy tried the door before he left, and, as a matter of course, found it locked.

Down on the street he walked beneath the lamps, keeping almost involuntarily in the shadows as much as possible and noting everything he saw.

He was followed, though for some time he knew it not.

Davy had at his heels a figure that went wherever he went, and stopped when he stopped, so as not to draw too near him.

There was the tread of a cat about the man who had found the Boy Spotter on the street. A pair of very sharp eyes glittered in the tracker's head, and when he walked after Davy he watched him after the manner of a lynx.

Nickel Nell lived on a quiet street where there were rooms to rent at low prices. Some of these rooms were near the sky and were not very desirable, but one has to put up with many inconveniences when not overburdened with wealth.

Davy knew that Nell had taken Mrs. Lane to her own abode, in hopes that the poor woman would become more reconciled to the situation and recruit her strength, which was failing because of the life she was compelled to lead in her desire to ferret out Hiram Honeybee and thus to right the great wrong which had been done the living and the dead.

Nell's rooms—there were two of them, small and naturally cramped—were rear ones which got a little sunlight during a part of the day and Davy had been to them before.

He found the house without difficulty, and as some of its occupants were in the habit of coming in at all hours, the door stood open.

He went in and ran up the stairs, but at the top of the flight he stopped and stood still.

Loud voices assailed his ears and the boy started when he heard a voice which sounded very much like Mrs. Lane's.

"I have been persecuted to the last round of the ladder. First the will—the false one, I mean—took the very house from us, and then everything which in the true document went to Holly and I—fell to young Mr. Natty, a dudish fellow who came from this city, and who, to the satisfaction of the court—God pity that court says I—proved that he was Mr. Lane's nephew!"

"Well, he had a nephew, hadn't he?" asked a man's voice.

"He had, a young man named Natty; but we always thought he was dead. I recollect how he looked when a boy, but I wasn't prepared to deny outright that the claimant wasn't the right man. As I have been telling you, he got the property in the long run, for what I got was in stocks which proved worthless after a year or so and I then realized the swindle which had been carried out. I fought the will as I could, but you see one can't do much without money or witnesses. Hiram Honeybee never signed that will. I tell you he never put his name to it, and I know it. When I find him I will prove it."

"But, don't you know, woman, that you may never find him? The man may be dead."

"When I know that I will stop. Yes, when I stand by the grave of Hiram Honeybee, or when I know that he is dead, then I will desist; but not a moment before."

"All right. I fear I can do nothing for you. Good-night!"

The door opened, and Davy drew back among the shadows at the steps and held his breath.

He was straining his eyes to get a look at the person who had been talking to Mrs.

Lane and in a moment he came from the room.

"Heavens! Is that the man? Why, that is Jack Jason—the man who has been persecuting Nell with his unwelcome attentions," and as the young fellow came forward the boy eyed him sharply, nor let up until he had passed down stairs and was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE ALERT.

"DID you see him? He went from this room just a moment ago and you must have met him on the stairs."

Mrs. Lane, white faced and excited, met the boy detective with these words as he came forward and saw her in the light.

The old lady was trembling and her hand clutched the handle of her cane as though she would have liked to have brought it down upon the young man's head.

"I saw him," quietly said Davy. "I happened to recognize him. Where is Nell?"

"I don't know. I came in from the street—I can't help being there looking for the missing witness—and found the room untenanted. I was sitting yonder when he came and stood near the door a full minute watching me with the sharp eyes of a cat. Something about him made me shake for he is the same man whom I took on the street for Van Kinder one of the young men of Pascal Point. He stood still while the team came at me and would not turn back to save me from the mad hoofs. To-night he appears in a new role. He found me out, how I cannot say, and came here to ask me some questions which have a strange bearing on my life-hunt. Among other things he wanted to know what has become of Holly, my grand niece—the young girl who was defrauded out of her rights by the false will. I was sharp enough for him and he did not make much out of me. You say you know him?"

"I know him as Jack Jason, a young man who seems to have plenty of money and nothing to do. Nell saw him come out of old Brass's office when she went down there to get employment and he has been persecuting her for some time with his attentions. But I guess Nell don't care a straw for him."

"I don't see why she should," answered Mrs. Lane. "The young fellow is impudent and while he would have me believe that he is Mr. Jason, I would swear that he is Van Kinder, the young man who knew so much about my husband's affairs. He left Pascal Point shortly after the presentation of the will which won the contest and it was thought by some that he had a finger in the pie. And to see him come here anxious to know what has become of Holly confirms the report."

"I will look into this matter a little," thought the Boy Spotter. "I will see where this young fellow lives and what sort of company he keeps."

Then he addressed Mrs. Lane again:

"You're not afraid to remain here till Nell comes back?"

"No. I will lock and bolt the door and no one shall come in but Nell herself."

"All right. Don't let any one else inside the door. Nell will be in soon. She's worth her weight in gold, that girl is, and you will find it out by and by."

"I've found that out already," smiled the woman. "I am willing to trust Nell the full length of the tether."

Davy did not expect to catch sight of Jack Jason when he should reach the street and he was not disappointed.

That worthy had vanished as completely as if the walk had opened and swallowed him and he hurried off up-town.

As Nell's would-be lover, Jack, had come under the boy's espionage prior to the open-

ing of our story, and Davy knew where he lived. He did not have to look for the house, but went straight to it and soon had it under his eyes.

He wondered if young Jack had beaten him home, but the aspect of the house told nothing and he fell back to the shadow of the trees on the opposite side of the street and watched on.

Suddenly a man came out and stood for a moment on the steps.

There was something about his figure that attracted the boy ferret from the start and as the person moved into the light and raised his head Davy started but kept back the cry that struggled toward his lips.

"I thought you were out of the city, Bolivar Brass?" he exclaimed, as he regarded the man at the door. "You say by your notice that you are out of the city and won't be back for ten days, but there you stand as large as life. What does this mean?"

The man called Bolivar Brass by the young shadow remained on the steps a minute longer and then tripped down with the elasticity of one much younger in years.

He moved off with his hat pulled over one side of his face as if he was not anxious to be recognized.

"So you come to see Jack Jason, do you, and he has just come from Mrs. Lane's presence where he has been adroitly questioning the old lady about Holly, the grand-niece who should have had the bulk of the Lane estate. I would just like to know what this means. I have seen Captain Paul die with a secret on his lips, and the papers which might have thrown some light upon the mystery have been stolen from me. I thought no one knew where they were but the captain and myself, but it seems that they were discovered by some thief who stole them for a purpose. To shield the guilty? Did the person who robbed me know the value of those papers which perhaps I should have read instead of tying them up again. The mystery deepens. I was on the trail to the secret of Hiram Honeybee's disappearance, but death came along and robbed me of that even. Captain Paul said he died, but did he? I—hardly—believe—it. I am getting to be like Mrs. Lane. She believes that the missing witness still lives."

Davy went after Bolivar Brass who gave him a good chase and who instead of going back to the office with the placarded door, turned suddenly toward the river and dodged into a snug little house from which he did not emerge though Davy watched it long and with a good deal of patience.

When he turned back he walked into the first hotel that lay in his path and opened the City Directory.

Turning to the N's he ran his finger down the columns until it rested on the name which read:

"NATTY, NATHANIEL, 867 B—avenue.

"He's got into the Directory anyhow," cried the boy as he read the name the second time. "This must be the fellow who got the bulk of the Lane fortune for he lives in a good part of town among the swells and the Directory sets him down as 'retired.' Retired on what? On other people's money? It looks that way. Well, I will see about this."

Detective Davy glanced up at the clock ticking away above the ornate desk and flitted out.

A passing car into one corner of which he snuggled carried him up-town until he reached a street where he alighted and looked around.

He was at one of the cross streets of B—avenue and had reached the thoroughfare near the number given in the Directory as Nat Natty's boarding-place.

"It's a good house, just such a one as a young man with plenty of cash would naturally inhabit. I don't see anything of Mr.

Natty, the lucky heir. I won't see Bolivar Brass come out of that house as I saw him quit Jack Jason's abode. But—"

He paused abruptly and in another moment had recoiled with a singular cry on his lips.

Sure enough; the door had opened and a man stood on the threshold.

He was young and elegantly clad. As he drew on a pair of gloves he was watched like a hawk by the boy ferret and when he came down the steps as if going out for a walk his figure was seen to be agile and dandified in appearance.

"Is that you, Mr. Natty?" mentally asked the boy. "Do you come out this time of night and go off somewhere? Well, you can do pretty much as you please since you are a 'retired' citizen."

The Boy Spotter saw the man joined by another person when he had reached the corner.

The next moment a carriage rolled up and the pair entered.

Ready for any adventure, the boy ferret ran toward the corner as the carriage door shut with a bang and he had just time to swing on behind as it moved off.

Making himself as comfortable as possible, Davy was hustled over the stones almost as fast as the horses could go and some time elapsed ere the vehicle showed signs of stopping.

Every now and then the young detective looked out from under his arm so as to keep the route in his mind for he might have need to recur to it in the future. When the vehicle drew toward the sidewalk he made himself as small as possible and held his breath as he used his keen black eyes.

The men alighted and moved toward a house which stood in the shadows of several trees.

"Great Caesar! that is the same house to which I tracked Bolivar Brass," cried Davy Doon. "In the name of common sense what does all this mean? Surely this isn't a dream. No, I am wide awake and on the alert as I should be. They are going into that house. Those men have come hither to see Bolivar Brass and I must know what takes place. I did not look for anything of this kind but everything is fish that comes to my net."

The carriage drove off with the boy still between the hinder wheels; but as soon as possible he dropped to the ground and sneaked back toward the house.

He was very anxious to see what had brought Jack Jason and Nat Natty to the place whither he had tracked the rascally lawyer and man of questionable acts, and was willing to run his head into danger to accomplish his purpose.

The house was as quiet as a grave when he drew near, but the moment he touched the sidewalk a light flashed up in one of the rooms and he bounded forward and placed his eye to the shutter. But nothing for a moment rewarded the boy detective. Everything was dark beyond the window.

Eagerly Davy put up his hands to part the slats when one of them broke with a sound like the report of a percussion cap.

CHAPTER VII.

IS IT HIRAM HONEYBEE?

"THAT'S bad!" exclaimed Davy Doon as the sound seemed to fill his ears like the roar of a cannon. "It will bring down upon my head the vengeance of the three or frighten them off and I won't get to carry out my purpose."

He had reason to fear this for he had just caught a glimpse of three men in the room beyond the window and was in the act of placing himself on the defensive when the window opened and he was confronted by a face which had two blazing eyes set in a white surface.

"Halt there!" cried a voice. "Here is the young spy. I will hold him level till you catch him. If he runs I'll drop him dead in his shoes, which perhaps I ought to do anyhow."

The front door of the house had already opened and Davy saw approach him with a bound another man who threw out his hands to clutch him.

There was no escape and the young detective was taken in before he could stir even if such had been his intention, menaced as he was by the revolver at the window.

"You were on watch, were you?" said the man who had caught Davy. "I did not expect to get you so easily, but you will learn by the outcome of this adventure that watching people isn't very profitable employment."

The boy was dragged to the house and the door closed behind him and his captor.

At the same time the window shut down, and the shutter was pulled to.

"I shall see them all anyhow," passed through his mind as he was taken toward the room alongside the hall. "I shall get a look at Boliver Brass, too. I wonder how he will take my capture? The old fellow evidently thinks everybody believes he has left the city but he will discover when he looks at me that I am one who thinks nothing of the kind."

In another moment Davy was ushered into the room and found himself faced by but one man. There was no one there who in the least resembled Bolivar Brass and the person who was there was Jack Jason who started when he caught sight of Davy.

"Place him in that chair," ordered Jack with a wave of the hand.

It was done, and the young detective was seated in an arm-chair, while his captor fell back a step and smiled.

"What were you doing at the window?" asked Jack.

Davy made no reply.

"I guess it's pretty plain—plain enough without asking questions," Jack went on. "You were playing spy, and if you get your neck in trouble you must blame no one but yourself."

All at once a sound seemed to come through the door and Jack's companion hastened out of the room. Presently, however, he came back and said something to Jack in low tones.

"We will have to insist on the truth. We must demand that you tell us why you were at the window when caught."

Davy looked at the two men, undoubtedly Jack Jason and Mr. Natty, and wondered what they would do if he should refuse to tell all. They were good-looking fellows, but might be desperate, and he did not care to provoke them too far.

Bolivar Brass had not shown up and Davy supposed he was keeping in the background for a purpose and doubted not that he was at that time in an adjoining room.

"Come. We will give you just three minutes by the watch," continued Jack, taking out his time-piece and holding it in his hand. "This is no child's play as you will discover if you don't act with reason. We are not to be trifled with and I will inform you now that you have poked your nose into dangerous business."

No need of telling Davy Doon this, though he did not say so. He knew that he was in the shadow of evil circumstances, and that his safety depended upon the mercy of the enemy.

Jack Jason advanced toward the young occupant of the chair as he spoke and for a moment looked at Davy with a good deal of eagerness.

"I think you have been interfering with my affairs before this," he said. "If I am not mistaken you have poisoned the mind of a certain young girl against me, and that's enough to make me your foe."

"I don't know about that, but I guess it

wouldn't take much poison to settle the case if you refer to Nell."

There was a sudden start on Jack's part showing that the shaft had gone home, and Davy turned to look at Mr. Natty whom he now saw for the first time fairly.

He was dudish in appearance as Mrs. Lane had briefly described him, but he was a young athlete and showed signs of having tarried too long at the wine.

He was sober now, however, but his eyes were red and they seemed to get a new and evil light as they regarded the boy ferret.

"He won't tell you anything," said Nat Natty. "I don't think we ought to fool long with this young rat. He was playing spy and you know, Jack, that we can't afford to have such people at our heels. Take him off. The carriage can be recalled in a moment, and you know where he will be safe."

These words, full of doom, sunk one by one into the boy's heart.

They almost threw him from the chair, and meeting the man's gaze with a look that contained a good deal of interest, he cried out:

"Don't you think, from the business you are engaged in, you ought to be watched a little? Think a moment. You are now playing a game which may get both of you into trouble, no matter how you dispose of me. You may even take my life, but that will not give you the victory. I could not help spying you to-night because—"

The raps sounded on the door once more and Jack Jason went toward it.

"My fate is sealed now. Your face tells me that, Jack Jason," said Davy to himself when he saw the man come back.

Jack and Nat held a low conversation, and then both advanced upon the boy.

"We don't want any explanation. We have seen all we want. I guess you're dangerous," and Davy was suddenly seized by the wrist and pulled forward.

"What are you going to do with me?"

"We intend to put you out of the way of harming any one."

"Do you intend to kill me?"

"Well, now, that's a pretty question. We have a right to do what we please with you, so come along and don't ask any questions. A spy's a spy, no matter what his age is, and youth don't excuse any one in our eyes."

Resistance was useless for Detective Davy saw that the men were enraged though they looked cool enough. They marched him out of the room and through another and thence into a cellar where Jack, after looking around for a moment, went to one corner and took out a stone in the wall.

The removal of the stone revealed an iron ring which pulled out after an effort, and Davy looked down into a dark opening which was revealed by the light which Natty held.

He now saw that they stood at a sham wall, that the door had swung back with the stones attached to it in some manner, and that, in fact, they were at the mouth of some pit or dungeon which was underneath the busy city.

The boy involuntarily drew back, but a hand thrust him forward and he fell against the jamb of the door with a cry.

"If I ever come out of that hole look out," he cried.

"We will be willing to do that—if ever you come out," was the answer accompanied by a laugh. "But I guess you won't spy at any one's heels after this, so go on and see what may be lurking in the darkness. You can't beat us at this stage of the game. The detectives will never come to you for any more clues."

Davy went forward. With welded lips and eyes that told the two men that he would smite them heavily if ever he came out of that place, he stepped over the threshold and was shut in.

The door swung to so easily that he was not startled by the noise; in fact, he hardly realized that he was shut in, but the darkness and some squeaking told him that he was in the home of the Norway.

He turned toward the door and found in the dark an iron ring like the one by which the portal had been manipulated.

Seizing it with all his might he pulled, bracing his feet against the hard wall, but the pull availed him nothing.

"What is this hole like?" he asked himself. "Will a match show me very much of it?"

He produced a match from his pocket and rubbed it over the surface.

"Hello! Some one has been here before me!" he cried. "What is this written—no, scratched—on the wall. Heavens! it is the name of Hiram Honeybee. I am on a trail!"

His eyes seemed to start from his head while he gazed at the name rudely scratched on the hard surface, but plain enough to tell him whose name it was.

Davy looked at the name until his match went out, and when he went down into his pockets for another he discovered that he had used the only one.

"What a misfortune! My last and only match. I would give a good deal for another. But I will see what is here if I can. How deep is the prison? I will follow this wall."

He did so, his hand for a guide, and all at once he stopped for his foot struck something hard, and stooping his hand felt with a shudder what he knew from the touch was a human skeleton!

A terrible question leaped uppermost in his mind.

He recalled the name on the wall.
Had he found Hiram Honeybee?

CHAPTER VIII.

ANOTHER FLY FOR THE WEB.

LEAVING the young detective in the under-corridor or dungeon, let us go up and enter the room where he was confronted by Jason and Nat Natty.

When these two men came back from below they stood face to face with another person who had emerged from an adjoining room and who seemed to be waiting for them.

This man was Bolivar Brass as Davy would have exclaimed could he have seen him.

The old lawyer was somewhat disguised and now stood in the middle of the chamber looking at his companions asking them questions with his deep-set eyes.

"The Boy Spotter is safe. There is no escape for him. Now let us go back to business."

These words were uttered by Natty as he threw himself into a chair and looked up at Bolivar.

"You're sure he's safe, are you?"

"Why, of course! Do you think we would leave the door unlocked and the key with him besides?"

"No, hardly," grinned Bolivar. "I don't expect anything of the kind; but, you see, I don't want him to know that I am in the city and not elsewhere as my placard says. It is a little ticklish and I want to be on the safe side."

"There's right where you are," was the reply, as the speaker glanced at Jack. "We don't propose to be on any other side just now. Let's see: We were talking about the old woman. She is here and may give us some trouble."

"Yes, that's it. Where is she?"

"At present she is domiciled with Nickel Nell," put in Jack. "I have been to the house and even had a talk with her. She has devoted her life to the righting of the wrong as she calls it and she will give somebody a good deal of trouble if the cards

aren't played just right. How does she look? Well, she looks a good deal older than she did when she made such a stubborn fight in the courts, but she has a good deal of vim yet. Why, her eyes flash when she talks about the case and the way she struck that horse at the crossing shows that she had lots of power in her limbs."

"She always had that," remarked Natty, stroking his mustache. "That is characteristic of her side of the house. The Mullens always had muscle and knew how to use it, besides. Is she determined in this matter?"

"You would think so if you could hear her talk."

"The girl, I suppose, is enlisted in her cause?"

"Of course."

"What do you say, Bolivar? You know something of this matter for you've had a finger in it—"

"Not so loud. You don't know who may be at the window," cried the old man throwing up one hand and springing to the window.

"You're not backing out, I hope?"

"No, but by George! I don't want to be overheard. I know the girl Mr. Jason is talking about. She gave me a shock a few hours ago and I haven't recovered from it yet. What do I say?"

"Yes. We want your opinion."

"My opinion of what?"

"What is best to be done. The old lady is in the city. She says she is on the hunt of Hiram Honeybee."

"Well, she can't find him."

Jack and his companion exchanged glances.

"You ought to be able to answer that question," continued Bolivar Brass. "If that woman finds Hiram Honeybee your interests might suffer. Let me see. When did he leave home?"

"Come! We don't care to go back to ancient history," laughed Natty, again stroking his mustache. "He left Pascal Point one night and never came back. That ought to be satisfactory to you."

"I guess it is satisfactory. I will consider it so at any rate. Well, if she can't find Hiram Honeybee what harm can she do anybody?"

Both men laughed.

"She may give us trouble."

"By getting some people to believe her story?"

"Just so."

"They will clap her into the asylum if she keeps on," was the reply. "They don't let people with a hobby air that hobby on the streets of this city. The first thing they know they are in a wagon going to the Island. Don't you see?"

"By Jove! Bolivar, you're a good one," cried Nat Natty, slapping the old lawyer on the shoulder. "I guess they can't circumvent you. If they do they will have to stay up all night to get a start. But you see I don't like to have my name connected with this old will matter. It was settled more than two years ago—settled to the satisfaction of the courts and everybody is satisfied but this crazy old woman and—"

"And the girl, Miss Holly Lane?"

"Yes, wherever she is," smiled Natty. "I would like to know what has become of her. Old Lucy wouldn't tell you, eh, Jack?"

"I couldn't extract that information from her. While I talked she pulled a letter from her bosom and looked at it. I tried hard to make out the post-mark, but failed. I am sure that letter was from the girl herself, but, of course, I have no positive proof."

"I would like to know," said Natty. "While she remains away she is not dangerous, but if she should come to New York and aid Old Lucy the two might give us trouble even without finding Hiram Honeybee."

A moment's silence fell in that room and was broken by Bolivar Brass who threw up his head and exclaimed:

"I was just thinking that it might be a good stroke of policy to get her to the city. She would be a stranger here and once out of the way, would never trouble us."

"She is very pretty, Bolivar, and there's where the trouble lies," laughed Jack. "Nat there might fall in love with her and turn against his friends."

"I'll run the risk of doing that," put in Natty with a laugh. "I don't care to divide what I've fought for. The lawyers didn't leave me very much and what I have I propose to keep. No love for me. If she comes she might be spirited out of the case and with her away, Old Lucy would be powerless."

"That's just what I think," replied Bolivar Brass. "But we must first find out where she is. If Jack could have read the post-mark on the envelope we would have scored a point."

"It might be done yet," was the quick retort. "There are several ways of getting that address, saying, of course, that Miss Holly penned the letter."

"Will you see to it, Jack?"

"I will do my best."

"That's all we can ask," Bolivar answered. "Meantime, I am 'out of the city' as the sign on my door says and I can be of some service, disguised as I am just now. The boy gave me a shock when I saw him through the key-hole of yon door, but I know he is out of the way now and that the young lynx will not play spy in the future."

For some time longer Jack Jason and his companions continued to discuss affairs in a like strain and when the conference was over he and Natty withdrew, leaving old Bolivar alone.

"What do you think of the old gudgeon?" asked the latter as they rounded a corner.

"He is a cute one and will serve us to the end with his valuable opinions and knowledge of the trickeries of law. He has been worth his weight in gold to us, and while he never appeared in the foreground, he gave us the victory and we can't afford to dispense with him."

"Of course not, but we must watch him. I am afraid that he does not keep his papers as private as he should. He really keeps a secret record of all he has done—I don't know why—and if some of these should see the light somebody might find themselves in trouble."

Nat Natty turned on his friend with a sudden start.

"You surely don't mean to say that Bolivar Brass has in writing a memorandum of his part and ours in the case of *Lane vs. Natty*?"

"I believe he has, but what of that so long as it is safe?"

"I don't like to think of that, I care not how 'safe' it is," was the reply. "He has locked up his office for ten days. Do you think he has left the papers there?"

"I don't know."

The teeth of the handsome young man seemed to clinch.

"Now let things go on as they are going," said Jack. "The young spy is caged and you know who his companion is. Make no fuss in another direction, I say, but let things move along as they are moving. When we find out where the grand-niece is we will play another hand. Meanwhile I am going down this street. Will see you to-morrow if not sooner. Good night."

They parted on a corner and Jack with a look at Natty walked rapidly until he came to the ferry-house.

The lights were brilliant there and the figure of the young man was plainly seen as he entered it.

Passing to the waiting room, he glanced at a time-card hanging in a prominent place and then turned toward the river as a boat well filled with the passengers of a night train came splashing up to the pier.

Suddenly Jack Jason started and then walked toward a beautiful girl who had made her appearance.

"Ah! this is luck—to see you the first one," he said with a bow and the removal of his hat. "You have arrived in safety I hope, Miss Holly. Your aunt has sent me for you as she could not come herself, and I am glad to be of service to you in the great city."

"Thank you; you are very kind," answered the blushing girl.

Another fly was at the edge of the web.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE SPIDERS' WEB.

THE young girl who was dressed in a traveling suit looked at the handsome fellow in amazement as if doubting his words though cleverly spoken and in a manner calculated to disarm suspicion.

It was evident that she was unused to city ways and for a time she seemed completely taken in by the rascal's address.

"Did my aunt tell you to meet me at the ferry?" she inquired. "She said nothing about it in her last letter, but, then, she—"

"Indeed!" broke in Jack, "she thought of coming herself—thought to meet you in person up to within a few minutes ago. But she became suddenly indisposed, nothing serious I am glad to say, and asked me if I would not come in her stead."

All this looked very nice and clever and Holly turned to a boy who was trying to relieve her of her travelling-bag and took a firmer hold on it.

As they moved out of the ferry-house a policeman who had watched the whole proceedings stepped up and spoke to the girl.

"Is this the gentleman who was to meet you at the ferry, miss?"

Jack Jason started and colored.

"It is all right I assure you, sir," stammered the girl.

"Very well, miss," and the policeman fell back and saw the two pass on.

"By Jove! that was a narrow escape," thought Jack to himself as he moved away with his victim.

"We will take a carriage to your aunt's," he remarked to Holly who kept at his side and in a moment he hailed one of the numerous cabs in the vicinity and they entered it.

As yet it had not dawned upon the girl that she was in the web of a lot of human spiders. As the cab moved off, rattling over the stones and now and then passing beneath the lights of New York, Holly looked into the man's face though he did all he could to hide it from her.

What was she afraid of?

All at once Holly Lane started and a cry slipped from her throat.

In a flash as it were a countenance which she had not seen for years came back to her and the gleam in Jack's eyes and something about his mouth when he spoke broke the dream of deception.

"I recall you now," she said. "I remember seeing you at the trial. You were a witness there and you testified against us. I can't see why you should be serving my aunt now."

Jack felt color leaving his face, for they were still many squares from the goal and he looked at the girl who was leaning forward and studying his face in the lights.

"You know me, do you?" he echoed.

"You are Van Kinder. I remember seeing you at the trial. You testified on the third day—the day before the case went to the jury and I believe you left Pascal Point that very night."

"Your memory is serving you in a singu-

lar manner, miss. I am not Mr. Van Kinder, but Mr. Jack Jason, as I can show you when we reach your aunt's."

But Holly was not to be deceived longer by the man.

Every look now confirmed her fears, and as the vehicle rattled on, taking her, as she now believed, from her real destination, she resolved to break the dream and get away.

"You will stop where we are now and let me out!" she cried, laying one hand on the inner door guard. "I will get out here. I believe you mean mischief, for when you say you are not Van Kinder, I believe you tell what is not true."

He merely smiled and laid his hand on Holly's wrist and let it close there like a vise.

"The carriage will not stop here!" he exclaimed. "It will go on to the place where I ordered. You will not leave it till it stops at my command."

Holly fell back in her seat with a groan.

She seemed to realize and suddenly that she had fallen into the web of the spiders, and that instead of being driven to Mrs. Lane, her grand aunt's, she was being escorted to a trap.

The poor girl, breathless and pale on the seat and confronted by Jack Jason, knew not what to do. She was alone in the great city—not only alone, but in the hands of a practiced scamp. She felt that she would never see her aunt, and that her trip to New York in the interest of the fight for justice was about to end in death.

On, on went the cab.

Suddenly, as if strengthened by the terror of her situation, Holly raised herself and looked at the man.

Escape without help was impossible. Jack had placed one foot before the door and he was watching it with eyes of a lynx.

She wanted to cry out for help, but the word seemed to stop in her throat and she again settled back into the corner and let the cab rush on.

"We are almost there," said Jack at last. "You are not so bad off as you imagine."

These were fatal words for their speaker. They roused Holly Lane to action at last and she started up and caught the hand that went toward the door to detain her.

"Drive faster," said Jack to the driver whose whip immediately cracked anew.

"Help! help!" screamed the girl.

The voice was smothered by the gloved hand of Jack Jason and she felt that her last hour had come.

The carriage was now rushing over the stones at break-neck speed. The horses were plunging on as if running away, but the driver kept his seat and now and then plied the whip.

They stopped at last.

As the cab moved toward the sidewalk in front of a rather good-looking house Jack leaned toward the half-fainting girl and grasped her wrist.

"We are here. It will do you no good to scream. Indeed, you will have to pay for it if you do. Beware!"

These words seemed to complete the spider's work for when he opened the door he lifted a swooning girl in his arms and carried her into the house.

Half an hour later this same man mounted the steps before another house more pretentious in many ways and rung the bell. He was at once admitted and stepped into a handsomely-furnished parlor where he stood face to face with Nat Natty who reclined in a chair in smoking-gown.

"I'm back a little sooner than I prophesied," said Jack. "I struck an unexpected bit of luck and I am here to report. You recollect Miss Lane?"

"Holly, the grand-niece?"

"Indeed, I do. I recollect her as she looked the last day of the trial when they found our will the good one. She stood there in the court-room like a statue in mar-

ble. She was very beautiful, was Holly Lane."

"Well, she hasn't lost any of her beauty."

"How do you know?"

"I have just left her."

"You?"

"Yes. I was struck by fortune to-night. I went down to the ferry and picked up the pearl."

"Do you mean to tell me that Miss Lane has come to the city?"

"I mean nothing else. She is in our little web now, the prettiest fly it ever caught."

Nat Natty sprung up and seized Jack Jason's hands. He shook them with delight, saying that he should have a big check for his work and ended by asking him for the particulars of his catch.

Jack nothing loth with a good cigar to lend zest to the relation told all as Natty listened with smiles of delight.

"What do you propose to do with the girl?" he asked, as he wound up. "She's inclined to prove a little obstreperous. I had an inkling of what we may expect in the carriage. She is not disposed to surrender, but will fight us with the spirit displayed by her grand-aunt in her hunt for Hiram Honeybee."

"Oh, we will master the girl!" cried Natty. "We have the cards in our hands. In the first place, we will get her to sign a paper saying that she believes the will sustained by the courts to be the true one and—"

"She'll never do that!" cried Jack. "You will never get Miss Holly Lane to do anything of the kind."

"We won't, eh? We will get old Brass to draw up an iron-clad document and she will put her name to it before to-morrow night. You shall see, Jack."

Jack Jason went to the window and looked out through the slats of the shutters. He was watched by Nat, who suddenly opened a drawer in the table near which he sat and took out a check book.

"You may need a little change to-morrow, and I may not see you at the right time," he went on and after writing in his book for a moment he tore out a check and threw it over to his companion.

It was a check for fifty dollars, and the semblance of a sneer came to Jack's lips when he noted the amount.

But the check was pocketed without any fault-finding and in another minute they had separated.

"What do you take me for, I wonder?" cried Jack, as he looked up at the building. "A check for fifty dollars when I have rendered three hundred thousand safe for you this very night. I'll be hanged if I'll have such a beggarly thing cashed!"

He took the check from his pocket, tore it up and after chewing the pieces in his rage, spit them into the gutter.

"Liberality will never kill you, Nat Natty, but the lack of it may lose you your head!" he growled, as he whisked himself round a corner and vanished.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. LANE'S NEW MISSION.

NICKEL NELL had something of importance to communicate to her boy detective friend shortly after the last visit made to her home by Jack Jason whose mission was to get the address of Holly, the grand-niece; but when she reached the boy's house she found the door locked and no one was able to tell her where Detective Davy was.

Sadly disappointed, Nell turned back not thinking for a moment that Davy was in the web of the city spiders, but hoping that he would turn up or that she would get to see him when she came back as she promised herself she would do.

Mrs. Lane was found in Nell's room anxiously waiting for her and the first words

she said to the girl were almost startling in their import.

"Look at this," she said, holding up a letter which gave evidence of having been through the mails.

"What is it?"

"Don't you see? I sent it to Holly, my niece, and it was found in one of the ferry-houses by a boy who must have read it, for in it I gave Holly particular directions where to find me, and that's how the boy knew that the letter came from me. He says he picked it up in the ferry-house awhile ago and brought it to me hoping to get something for his trouble and I gave him my last penny."

Nickel Nell took the letter but did not look at it while Mrs. Lane eyed her with a great deal of curiosity.

"Why," said Nell at last, "this would indicate that Holly came to the city."

"That's what alarms me. If she was not here how could the letter have been lost in the ferry-house? They have to come over on the boat to land in New York from the Jersey City depot, and Holly must have come."

Nickel Nell said nothing for a moment, but the dreadful truth was gradually forcing itself upon her.

She seemed to see the shape of a trap for the unwary; she almost felt that the girl from Jersey had been deceived by a story calculated to deceive the shrewdest and when she looked up at Mrs. Lane she saw a face very white and full of fear.

"I am going down to the ferry," cried the old lady. "I will, perhaps, by inquiry there find out if a girl who looked like Holly came across the river."

"You shall not go alone," was the instant response. "I will go with you."

It did not take the two long to get ready for the trip and in a short time they were on their way to the river.

Nell thinking of the strange finding of the letter feared that the worst had happened, and when they reached the ferry she had but little hope of learning anything about the grand-niece.

Mrs. Lane beat down her eagerness as well as she could, but she showed considerable excitement.

Her first care was to look for a policeman, but as none was to be seen in the ferry-house itself she hobbled outside and accosted the first one she caught sight of.

He listened attentively to the old lady and when she was through he said quietly:

"I thought something was wrong the moment I saw the pair, but the girl said all was right and of course I had no right to interfere."

"You saw her, then?"

"I certainly saw a young lady who answers your description of your niece. She was met by a man in the ferry-house and they took a cab out yonder, for I watched them till they were driven off."

"Taken in charge of by a man?" gasped Mrs. Lane as she showed signs of swooning on the stones. "This is terrible but nothing more than I have feared. I shall never see Holly again. She has fallen into the web of sharps and will never come back to comfort my old age after we shall have won the battle against the plotters."

She pressed her hands wildly to her head and staggered back.

"What does this mean, miss?" asked the policeman looking at Nickel Nell. "Was she looking for the young lady?"

"She was, and, what is more, the girl has fallen among plotters and even now may be in prison or some infamous trap."

"Tell me all you know about the case."

Nell was proceeding to do this when Mrs. Lane sprung up and caught her sleeve.

"Don't! Don't tell him, but let us see what we can do."

Nell looked at her in amazement.

"I fear we can do nothing."

"We can go to the boy who sometimes ferrets out such things as this. He was kind to me when he found me wandering in the streets without shelter and hardly enough to eat. He will take this matter in hands and from what you have told me, Nell, I believe he is as good as a dozen men detectives."

"Who is she talking about?" queried the officer.

"She means Davy Doon."

The man smiled for he well knew the boy, and turning to Mrs. Lane said reassuringly:

"If you need a rat who can get into dark places and out again that boy is just the person for you, but I fear he can do nothing with a case of this kind."

"I will see him. Many thanks to you, but we must see Davy."

They went off together and the officer smiled and shook his head as the twain disappeared.

Another trip to the Boy Spotter's house resulted in the same manner; Davy was not at home and for a moment Nell and her friend stood nonplussed in the narrow corridor near the door.

Some time had passed since the young detective's adventure in the underground corridor and the night was advancing toward the middle hour.

It was late for women to be abroad, but Nell and Mrs. Lane did not think of this while they stood near the boy's door wondering what kept him away.

All at once some one came up the steps, and clutching Mrs. Lane's arm, Nell pulled her back among the shadows and they stood together with bated breath while they watched the top of the flight with their hearts in their throats.

Perhaps Davy was coming home!

Presently a figure rose above the topmost step, and with a sudden cry of "Tis he!" the old lady sprung forward but the next instant drew back and seemed to shiver.

Nickel Nell who had witnessed this startling scene could not speak, but looked with all eyes as she saw the person on the steps pause and stare at Mrs. Lane who was looking at him with her eyes seeming to stare from her head.

"Look! I haven't seen that man since we walked out of the court-room and left him in possession of what never should have been his," exclaimed Mrs. Lane, who was covering the man with her quivering finger. "What brings you to this place? Do you know where the boy is?"

Nell noticed that the man was good looking and well dressed and for a moment thought she had seen him before.

"Don't tell me that you are not the man who impersonated Nat Natty at the trial," continued Mrs. Lane. "You are that person and you dare not deny it."

He smiled and came forward as if he was going to play a cool game of bluff.

"You are mistaken. I have been taken for a Mr. Natty before now and you are the second person who has been mistaken in this matter. I don't know Mr. Natty only through his reputation, and I must say that you two women are out rather late and in a strange place."

"You can't deceive me. I watched you too long at the trial and if I were to be hanged this minute my last breath would accuse you of being the man who won the hard-fought contest and who cheated the rightful heirs out their rights. You are Nat Natty, so called. I dare say are living high on the money you stole that time. What has become of Holly?"

The man started in spite of his assumed coolness and fell back almost to the door of Davy Doon's room.

"Confess! I ought to sink my fingers into your throat and thus in part pay you back for your villainy."

She advanced toward him with the fury of a tigress, and the man, actually fearing her, shrunk nearer to the wall; and Nell, watching him like a hawk, saw that he was ill at ease.

But, all at once, Mrs. Lane stopped, and then stepped back herself.

"You are certainly he," she went on. "I know you are that rascal. I will not touch you, but from this hour, having found you, I will give you all the trouble you can take care of, and you will soon learn that I am not to be trifled with."

The man said nothing. Now and then he nervously pulled his mustache and eyed the old lady with the look of a fiend.

It was evident that he had fallen into a trap of his own setting, that he had not expected to see Mrs. Lane there, and when he turned to quit the place she came at him with her hands clinched and her face almost scarlet.

"I will follow you! Come, Nell! Wherever this man goes we will be at his heels!" she cried. "He shall not escape us now. I have been looking for him as well as for Hiram Honeybee, and having discovered him, first, we will make the most of our luck."

Nickel Nell, who knew something of city ways, would have dissuaded Mrs. Lane from carrying out her threat; but, the woman was determined; and when the man reached the staircase he turned, and looking at the woman, said maliciously:

"If you follow me, madam, it will be the most unfortunate play of your life!"

With this he went down the stairs, his feet seeming to give emphasis to his words as he planted them on the steps.

CHAPTER XI.

OUT OF THE WEB.

A BOY stood leaning against a dark wall with something moldy in his hand.

He could not see his hand before his face and while he stood there breathing the noxious odors of a charnel house he recalled his last adventures.

He had lately stumbled over something which upon investigation he found to be a skeleton and, stooping, had found near the hideous hand the papers he now held in his grip.

Davy Doon was still the prisoner of the corridor, for he had discovered that such was the place of his confinement and now stood listening at the wall, for sounds had come through it as if he were not very far from a merry lot of drinkers, who seemed to be making a night of it.

The bones of the skeleton lay at his feet, but he could not see them, for his only match had been used, and he was without the means of making another light.

Hours had passed since his capture by Jack Jason and his friends, and the dungeon had shown no signs of giving him up.

It was as provoking as it was terrible.

"I must get out somehow, but how?" queried the boy detective. "I am anxious to see what I have picked up here in the dark and who wrote it. I more than half believe that I have found Hiram Honeybee; but, that is to be settled in the near future. This paper ought to show me what I have found."

He went to the end of the corridor for perhaps the twentieth time.

It seemed as impregnable as ever and he felt like turning back and dying in the dark with the secret of the hunt in his possession.

Suddenly the sounds which he had heard before became louder and the revelers more boisterous.

Davy listened with all his might and seemed to distinguish the strains of a drinking song as it floated to his ears from somewhere he knew not whither.

All at once, however, he started, for the

song died out in a strange whoop. Then all was still.

"If I could get beyond that wall I would have everything to my notion. In other words, it would be all O. K. and then I would reach liberty again. Get out of this, I must!"

With the energy of despair he now fell to work on the almost smooth stones with nothing to aid him but his good knife-blade.

The stone worked at so assiduously yielded at last and then the eager hands of the boy fell to work on the filling beyond it.

Something fell inward all at once and the next moment he ran his arm into an opening from which came a puff of air!

Davy uttered a cry of victory and fell back a moment.

He entered the hole thus revealed and with the papers in his bosom crawled down a narrow passage until he was checked by the end of it.

"One more glass, boys!" he heard a voice say, in maudlin tones. "We will leave Billy to his slumbers in a little while, so one more toast over the dead!"

"Is it a wake?" mentally asked the Boy Spotter as he listened. "Have I come upon a watch over the dead? They seem right overhead and a trap-door may exist here."

He heard the clinking of glasses in the final toast, and when the merry-makers ceased they seemed to go out, shutting a door behind them.

All was as still as the grave now.

Detective Davy tried to climb up so as to touch the ceiling overhead and after several ineffectual trials he accomplished his purpose and felt the rough ceiling.

It did not take long for the active lad to rap on the ceiling and his raps were rewarded by hearing a sound which told him that the room above was inhabited; and then, to his joy, a trap-door opened and he was blinded by a bright light.

"In the name of all that's good!" cried a man whose face seemed to fill the opening. "Where did you come from? By Jupiter! mebbe you're not flesh and blood, but come from the time we've been having here to-night."

"I'm all hunky!" assented Davy, as he tried to scramble over the edge of the trap and was lifted into the room by a hand that trembled while it performed the service.

"You are, eh? Well, you're all covered with dirt and webs. Where have you been?"

"In the first place, tell me where I am?"

"You're in Billy Blee's place, but you're all right. I'm a gentleman, I am, but I never thought of seeing a living boy come to my shanty through the cellar—No, through that old passage, I mean."

Davy, the detective, had never heard of Billy Blee, but that made no difference, and he was satisfied with affairs as they were.

The man had been drinking, for his face was red though the young detective's appearance had whitened it somewhat and he was ready to thank Billy for his kindness.

"Won't you have suthin'?" asked the fellow, leading the way to a table well littered with the remains of the last bout. "The boys had a merry time of it and left something I guess."

"I'll take some water—that's all," said Davy who was dry and flushed.

"Water?" cried Billy shrinking back and staring at him in amazement. "I can get the article for you, but we don't use it much here. I guess you're a teetotaler; but, that's all right. If I had been cooped up down there water'd be the last thing I'd think of."

Detective Davy didn't doubt this, for the man's face told him an unspeakable story, and Billy, after ten minutes' absence, returned with water of which the boy drank eagerly.

The boy was anxious to get out of the place

and to go back to his own little den where he could look at the papers he had found in the skeleton hands.

He had never been just so eager before, and, as soon as he could do so with propriety, he went away.

But first, he had made Billy Blee promise not to say a word about the escape. This the man did with pleasure, for he was an easy-going fellow who thought the boy needed to be helped, and said he would aid him against the men who had cooped him up.

Davy pulled his hat over his eyes when he struck the street and kept in the shadows of the great buildings.

"Won't some one have to pay for this?" he exclaimed as he hurried along. "Won't I make them wish they had never heard of Davy Doon? They may hold the upper hand now, but the time is coming when their trumps will be worth nothing to my little joker, and when they will see their game played out against themselves. I am on the war-path now, and if these papers don't solve the fate of Hiram Honeybee I shall be mistaken. But I will know soon, for here I am near the old den."

He mounted the stairs to his door and quickly was at home once more.

Drawing a chair to the table, but not until he had secured the door against intruders, the young shadow took from his bosom the old documents which, even in the darkness, he had discovered were covered with mold as if they had lain there for years.

The first glance at them made the boy's heart fall to immeasurable depths in his bosom.

They almost fell to pieces as he laid them on the table; but nothing daunted, he leaned forward and began to look through them.

He found that the lot was composed of three papers and that these were so near dissolution that none but an expert could make out their contents.

Davy, therefore, fingered the papers with the greatest care.

"It's a bu'stin' job," he said aloud, as his hands ran lightly through the disordered fragments. "I don't see how I am to get head or tail out of the mess. Wish I had an expert here."

Suddenly, however, he started, for on one of the fragments which lay at his hand he saw a name which secured his undivided attention.

"Here is the name of Hiram Honeybee! Nell saw it on the sheet in Bolivar Brass's office, and now I find it here. This is strange and somewhat startling, but it is true!"

He took up the bit of paper and held it to the light.

"What is this other word?" he went on. "The hand that wrote it seems to have done so in the dark, and with a pencil at that! Was it written in the underground place?"

The boy's eyes seemed to start from his head and he read what he had found with more than single interest.

"I see! I begin to see through this mystery. The man who wrote what I read here did it in the dark. Was the writer Hiram Honeybee? and was it his skeleton I found down there? I may get out of this trap and I may die here—like a rat in a trap. The meaning of that line is not doubtful. I can tell what that means. And this other one: 'I will leave this paper for those who come after me. It will be found by some one and vengeance may be long delayed.' That's easy. I know who wrote this. Hiram Honeybee wrote these lines and—Ho! here is something which tells me he may have escaped."

"I am trying to get out, but whether I do or not I will leave this paper behind. I have opened the wail. I have started a tunnel, but, Heaven knows where it will lead to. Perhaps into another trap—I am going out to-night. Good-by!"

Davy Doon started up with a cry.

"He got out!" he exclaimed. "Hiram Honeybee surely escaped from the trap. I am going to believe with Mrs. Lane that he is still in the land of the living! But I have what he left in the trap. I have something to tell me that the missing witness knew that the will admitted by the courts was a fraud."

The boy looked up with a smile of victory on his face.

"But whose skeleton was that in the dark? Maybe they retrapped him!" he exclaimed.

CHAPTER XII.

QUICK WORK.

"It must be quick work now so far as plotters are concerned," remarked the Boy Spotter as he looked at the papers on his table and realized what their finding meant. "They will take flight perhaps if they discover that I have escaped from the trap. Yes, if my flight is found out they will not stand on the order of their going, but may go at once and we will be left in the lurch. I don't see, however, how a man like Nat Natty who lives in clover with all the money he wants at his command can pull up stakes and get out. He won't like to leave his enemy behind and, his position in society will trouble him somewhat. I wonder what Nickel Nell and Mrs. Lane are doing. I believe I will go and see them first."

He turned from his den and made his way to the little house occupied by Nickel Nell and her new found friend.

The night was late and Davy, taking the shortest cut, found himself near the house in which in his presence the strange man known as Captain Paul had taken his own life with the deadly poison.

He had heard nothing of the matter since the tragic event and when he looked up and saw the tall old buildings of Gotham Court in front of him he went that way and rapped at Muzzles's door.

He was admitted by Muzzles himself, who looked at him as if he were one who had risen from the dead, and when the boy ferret requested to be led to the cellar, Muzzles heeded the request.

In a short time Davy was running down the sewer to the hole from whence he could pull himself up into Captain Paul's room.

He found the scene of the sudden death vacant, but he had not forgotten his adventures there, including the revolver which had been thrust into his face from the window.

Now there was no one to disturb him, and he stood for a few moments in the chamber where Captain Paul had slipped from his chair and fallen to the floor, a suicide.

"No one here! Captain Paul died sure enough, and the old trap hasn't been inhabited since. But there's time enough yet. Some poor devil will be thankful for the den, and ere long the place will be occupied, but not by a man who had a strange life-history like the one who lived here last. He was a man of mystery, Captain Paul was. He was a criminal who had helped in a good many evil things, and he was always afraid that some day or other they would pull him up and lengthen his neck according to law."

The boy detective took another look round the room and then turned away.

"I'll go back now and find Nell and Mrs. Lane," he decided. "I'll tell them that we have a bitter foe and that the plotters will not show mercy while they are able to fight her."

He was at the door when another opened in another part of the old house.

"I'm not the only person here," thought the youthful Davy as he drew near the wall and waited.

Presently some one entered the room

where he stood and the boy felt though he could not see some one quite near him.

"I guess this is the same old den," said a voice. "I hope I haven't made a mistake. They've driven me from pillar to post and yet I haven't the courage of a sparrow."

Davy tried to catch sight of the speaker, but the dense darkness that filled the room prevented, and he was forced to wait and listen and watch.

"I saw the old woman to-day, I did! She's changed somewhat, and looks a good deal older. She seemed to be looking for something, and the girl she had with her couldn't have been Holly, the grand-niece who lost her share in the big estate when the court knocked out the underpinning from their side of the case."

"Heavens! who is yonder?" Davy Doon asked himself as he heard these words in the dark. "What does that man know about the Lane fight? How came he to know anything about Miss Holly, the grand niece, and about the battle over the will?"

"I guess I'll bunk here. It's as good a place as any and they won't look for me where a man killed himself. It was Captain Paul—the man who met me the day I came to New York and whose fingers wove the cold, clammy net about my hands. Captain Paul! I knew I had fallen into vulture talons the day I met him, and he played it mighty fine in his way."

The voice ceased, but the next moment the boy hugging the wall in the dark was thrilled as he had never been thrilled in all his life.

"I'll light a candle. They won't see the light for I fixed the windows last night."

The man was going to strike a match!

Davy held his breath and waited for the next move. In a moment the room would be illumined by a match and he would be discovered.

The thought was enough to send a sudden thrill through every nerve.

Presently a match was heard drawn along the wall; then a flame leaped up.

As it gathered volume the expectant Boy Spotter saw first the outlines of a man, then the deep-set eyes and attenuated figure to the shoes.

It was the form of one who had seen hard times. The eyes were almost ravenous in their gleam, and the hands were like those of a skeleton though their color was not the same.

Davy saw the man apply the match to a candle which he had fished from somewhere, and in another moment a permanent light had been obtained.

"Now that's better!" ejaculated the man. "I don't feel very well any more with a light about me, but I have to have one now and then. This is a pretty good place for me, but I used to have a better."

He smiled as he spoke and ran his hand through the beard that covered the lower part of his face.

"Who is that man? In the name of heaven! who have I run across in Captain Paul's den?" wondered the boy shadower.

All at once the man picked up the candle and moved toward the very spot where the boy detective stood.

Davy would have forced his body into the wall if it had yielded, but it was obdurate and he could go no further.

"My God! who are you?" cried the man, as he stopped with an abruptness which startled the young spotter. "What brought you to this house? Don't you know that I am a desperate man and that I will kill any one who tries to take me back to the old trap into which I was lured nearly three years ago?"

"Nearly three years ago?" echoed the boy.

"That's what—nearly three years ago!" repeated the man. "It is true, but you seem to doubt it. I believe you are in the

plot and that you are one of the spies who have been on my heels ever since I got away."

Light seemed to break upon a dark mystery as the man talked, his eyes strangely on fire and the light flickering in the tallow as the skeleton hands shook.

"You must be Hiram Honeybee."

A startling cry followed the name and the holder of the candle with an oath dashed it to the floor where it went out, for in the last flash of the light Davy saw him set a heavy foot upon it.

In another instant there was a spring toward the back door of the den and the startled boy detective heard it open and shut and then all was still.

The man was gone!

In the thrill of the moment, and amid the startling silence, the young shadower stood like one in a dream. He could not realize that he was playing a part in a real drama, for what had happened within the last few moments was so thrilling that he was not himself for some time.

The silence was not broken, though he waited for the man to come back from the other rooms.

At last he advanced himself. He slipped on the crushed candle on the floor, but recovered and pushed on. The door beyond stood open and he passed into a smaller room and then on to the cramped back yard.

It was tracking the man by guess, but everything went to show that he had quit the premises, for Davy found traces of grease on the fence where he had scaled it.

For some moments he stood there trying to fix in his mind the looks and identity of this night visitor.

Why had the name of Hiram Honeybee frightened him away? Why had he rushed off at mention of the name of the missing witness—the man whose testimony at the celebrated trial might have saved the Lane estate to the rightful heirs?

Davy climbed the fence where the Unknown had scaled it, and as he dropped on the further side something that glittered caught his eyes.

In a moment he had pounced upon a ring with a singular setting—a heart grasped in a hand.

Of course he carried his find to the light and looked at it closely. He had never seen a ring like it, and everything went to show that it was an old one for it had been worn a long time.

"It's something and I will show it to Mrs. Lane," he decided as he started off.

At the first alley, which was very rear, he heard a step, and as he turned, a hand went around his neck.

Before he could cry out his face was driven against a man's breast and a hand was playing hunt in his pockets!

"Many thanks!" cried a voice as he was released. "I guess you won't show it to anybody now. You're a spy, just as I expected!"

Davy was given a push that sent him headlong down the alley, and when he came to look he found that he had been robbed of the ring!

"That's what I call lightning recovery," he remarked with a smile.

CHAPTER XIII.

THEFT.

MRS. LANE listened amazed to the story the young spotter told when he came to her in Nickel Nell's quarters.

She did not know what to say about the identity of the man encountered in the old trap formerly occupied by Captain Paul, the singular suicide.

"From the way he started at the mention of the name of Hiram Honeybee he may have been that person," the old lady inferred. "But, I can't reconcile his appearance there

with the skeleton in the corridor of the place where you were confined by the three men. Of course, this witness who knows so much cannot be both dead and living. He may have escaped from the hole and some other man may have fallen into the trap and died there. That is about the only construction I can put upon the mystery, and that is not very satisfactory. Hiram Honeybee had just such a ring as you describe. I think it was given to him by my husband, some time before the making of the will. I remember seeing a ring of that description in the old cherry desk at home, but there may have been another just like it. I don't know. The mystery is getting very dark—the case more baffling."

Of course Davy Doon had been told about the letter which was found in the ferry-house, and about the words of the policeman who remembered the young girl met there by a young man who answered to the description of Jack Jason. He said nothing for a moment, when he exclaimed.

"It looks like they had captured the girl. I think she is a fly in the web of the conspirators."

"Don't you think we ought to have older heads in consultation?" asked Nickel Nell.

"If you want them they will be forthcoming," said Davy, turning to Mrs. Lane. "I still think I will enmesh the whole lot and that before they can accomplish their purpose. If the man I encountered at the den was Hiram Honeybee he is afraid of the gang and will not want to come forth with the truth while the shadow of their work is about him. My best judgment tells me that Bolivar Brass is the legal head for the plot and that the old scamp will suggest a thousand ways by which they can escape—unless he is cornered himself and made to suffer as he deserves."

Mrs. Lane was silent for a moment, then with a quick start she said to the boy shadower:

"I recall the second day of the trial, when a man came to Pascal Point and was closeted with Mr. Natty, the claimant. He didn't stay long, but the next day the case was conducted in another manner, just as if that man, whoever he was, gave other advice. That person may have been Bolivar Brass and from the description I have had of him from Nell I am inclined to the opinion that it was the rascally lawyer. He is capable of anything that is low in cunning, and would not stop to play the meanest hand available."

"I will see about that old scamp," replied Spotter Davy. "I am sure he is one of the three engaged in this plot to defraud you and Miss Holly and I will look after him."

"I wish you would. I would like to have a look at him myself—a good look, which I promise you he would never forget."

"I don't doubt that," answered Davy with a smile and a cunning glance at Nell. "He needs more than a look, however. Just now he pretends he is out of the city, when he is 'on the ground,' as they say, giving Nat Natty and his companion, Jack, all the advice his head is capable of hatching out."

"He's a mean old man—a fox that will be hard to catch; but if any one can catch him it is you, Davy."

The boy detective received Nell's compliment with a blush and repeated his determination of at once putting Bolivar Brass in a delicate position.

"I think I know where to find him, and won't let any grass grow under my feet. I am off now."

The Boy Spotter was quickly on the sidewalk, with a well conceived scheme in his active mind.

The house into which he had been dragged, owing to the breaking of the slat of the shutter, was not hard to find, and giving up thoughts of looking for Holly just then, he made his way thither and found it apparently deserted.

But, something told him that the man who had posted a lie on his door was inside; so he began to inspect the place though he did not intend to enter and thus run another risk. To proceed with all possible caution was now his policy.

Bolivar Brass was inside.

The old fleecer, who, in fact, had been frightened from his regular office by Nell's sudden discovery of a certain name on a certain document, was quite alone.

He had assumed a slight disguise, the best part of which was a false beard which completely altered his appearance, and sitting at the table with some papers before him he seemed at his ease and in no fear of being disturbed.

This time no slat broke to announce the presence of a spy; but, one was at hand, all the same. A pair of keen eyes were at the window, and Bolivar had some one to watch him at his meditations and solitary proceedings.

All at once the old rogue sprung up and went to one side of the room where he opened an old-fashioned valise and took from it some more papers, which he carried to the table.

Sitting down, again, he began to go over them, when the door behind him opened noiselessly.

The boy watching at the window saw a man step into the room, and to his astonishment he noticed that it was the same one he had seen in Captain Paul's den!

Could it be Hiram Honeybee visiting Bolivar Brass?

This intruder silently advanced across the room, and stopped where he could look down over Bolivar's shoulders and study the papers in the old trickster's hands.

Davy saw a gleam light up the deep-set eyes; he bent forward, the skinny hands were lifted, and the next instant one of them had swooped down upon the documents in the lawyer's possession.

Bolivar Brass fell back with a sudden cry, and when he looked up and caught a glimpse of the man in the room, it seemed as if his whole face underwent a change—that he shrank within himself.

It was such a picture of horror as Detective Davy had never seen, and while he looked at it he could not repress a smile.

Clasping the papers in his hands, the thief watched the shivering Bolivar; he appeared to take great delight in the terror he was causing; and when he came close again, the lawyer threw up one hand to warn him off though he did not have the strength to resist a child.

"I guess I have as good a right to this paper as any one else," said the stranger.

"I—I don't know about that," stammered the lawyer shark.

"You don't, eh? Well, if you don't, I would like to know who does?"

"You know it doesn't belong to you."

"When, pray, did you become owner of it?" was the instant retort accompanied by a derisive laugh. "You no more own it than you own the moon and I guess you haven't been able to steal that yet."

Old Bolivar said nothing.

His teeth were chattering as Davy could see, and when the stranger drew back with the papers tightly gripped in his hand, Bolivar dropped forward in the chair and seemed to swoon.

"Here! I don't want to go away and leave you in this condition!" cried the man. "I will give you back one of the papers. I believe I have taken three. Which one do you want?"

"I will take the one to the right—the one sealed with red wax."

"You will, eh? I guess I prefer to keep that myself. It is the most important one and it will not pass from my hands, just now."

The old fleecer groaned in despair.

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Feather my nest, maybe! Don't you think I would be doing right to sell it to the best bidder? It is worth something, eh, Bolivar? and the wonder is that you did not destroy it, long ago. Is it a club which you have been holding over his head?"

No reply.

"Well, good-night, then! You may tell him, if you wish, that I have taken this paper."

Old Brass, with his eyes starting from his little head, looked at the speaker, but said nothing.

He let him get to the door, watching him all the time like a hawk, and when the door had closed the old schemer sunk back in the chair, as white as a burial shroud.

"Robbed of the best card I ever had in my hand!" the boy spy heard him cry, as he shut his hand and struck one of the arms of the chair with all his might. "Why didn't I have courage to spring up and cut off his retreat? I had him at my mercy, but I hadn't the spunk of a flea. I let him carry it off and he threatens to sell it to the best bidder. What if he takes it to the old lady, or to Natty himself? How will I be able to face the storm if he carries it out? But, he won't do that. It would be ruinous to him, for Nat would turn on him like a lion and the next time the trap would hold its catch for good and all; the world would never see him again."

Old Bolivar sat staring at the wall like a man losing his mind, and Davy left him in this state of mind and silently withdrew.

CHAPTER XIV.

DAVY PLAYS ANOTHER HAND.

THE next morning bright and early a boy rang the bell attached to Bolivar Brass's door.

The sun had come up and was gilding the tall spires of New York City and the boy at the bell seemed eager to get into the house.

There was no response to the ring and for some time he stood on the steps with his expectations on the alert only to have them disappointed.

Suddenly he was accosted by a voice which came from the sidewalk below the steps and, turning round, he looked into the face of a man who had come up without being seen.

"I guess you won't find the old man at home," said this person. "I think he went off last night to be gone some time, if not for good."

"Gone for good, do you think? I don't see why he should go off so suddenly."

"Neither do I for he rented the house of me for a good term and paid for it in advance."

"Rented it of you, did he?"

"Yes. He brought his things round some nights ago—he hadn't very many of them—and I saw him installed, hoping that I was getting a quiet renter. He never said a word why he was going away; but he may have been disturbed by the rats underneath the house; but that's not my fault, you know."

"Of course not," remarked the boy. "Then if he is gone, I need not look for him here. Did he take anything with him?"

"Pretty much all he brought—the house was already furnished, you see. I saw him go off in a hack about ten and he left the key with me at the store, saying rather generously that I might have the rent, and thanked me besides."

"He didn't appear frustrated, did he?"

"No, only he looked like a man eager to get off. I don't know what should scare him as he was one of those men who have a wonderful control over themselves."

"You don't know him," said the boy to himself. "No, you don't know Bolivar Brass. He was badly frightened last night. He saw a man who had come back from the dead, and that's why he packed his duds and left the house."

Half a minute later the boy had turned from the door and was going down the street at a smart gait.

"I didn't get to play my little card on old Bolivar's table this morning, but I will play it yet," he said to himself. "I found the nest empty which wasn't very strange after what happened last night. He is 'on the wing' now, but I think we can bring the bird down."

"Well!" said two women in one breath, as this same boy entered their presence shortly afterward.

"I found the nest empty," was the reply.

"You did? Didn't you find the old scamp at home?"

"He had taken French leave and was gone, that's all there is of it. He packed his valise last night and stole off with the shadow of a fear at his heels."

"He must be found! This man is the brains of the plot against Holly and I—this rascal, Bolivar Brass, lawyer, is the person who gave the legal advice that won the game when we fought over the will. He may have suggested the vanishment of Hiram Honeybee and what not."

"I shall not give up the hunt, you may depend on that. I am in the game to the close and I think I will be able to unearth the mole. As to Holly I shall now see what we can learn about her. It may be a long and exciting hunt. She was met at the ferry, you know. The policeman there saw the meeting and even gave you a good description of the agent of the plot. Holly is the fly in the web. I will see."

Once more the Boy Spotter was on the trail, but this time his attention was directed toward the discovery of the present whereabouts of the girl who had fallen into the web of the spider at the ferry-house.

He went down to the place itself and found on duty there the same policeman who had volunteered the information which had startled Mrs. Lane and Nell.

When the officer recognized his young interrogator he was eager to give him all the information in his power, for the boy was well known to the "cops," and in a short time Davy Doon knew something about the man who had driven the hack.

It was now a hunt among the cabmen and after an hour's search he was sure he had turned up the right one.

Sitting on his box in the shade of some trees at the edge of a small park, was the man who answered the description given by the policeman at the ferry.

"He's a tough customer, I can tell that by the cut of his jib," said Davy. "I'm all hunky with a good many of the cabbies, but this fellow is one I have never seen and I don't know how I will get along with him."

In another minute he was sidling up to the cab, while the man seemed dozing on the box.

"I say, Jack, what will you take to drive me to the Battery?" asked Davy.

The fellow started and half contemptuously looked at the boy.

"A half if you have it," he answered.

"I'll double it and thank you besides," was the reply. "I want to get there promptly for I am to meet a gentleman friend of yours."

"You are, eh? I have a good many gentlemen friends and it's pretty hard to tell which one of them you're going to meet. But, get in."

"Or climb up, which?"

"Either. You'll be a fare no matter where you ride."

Davy climbed nimbly to the seat beside the man and they started off.

"Yes, I am to see on the Battery a friend who sometimes patronizes you."

"Eh?" said Jehu with a covert look.

"Why of course—the one who gave you the job at the ferry. You raced him well, he says, nearly killed your horses and got extra pay. He's as liberal as a prince, and knows how to spend his money besides."

"That's what! I like 'em. Men of that stamp are born, not made, and that one is as proud as a pink. I like him, I say."

The ride to the Battery was of short duration and Davy who was well disguised told the driver where to stop.

"If I don't find him you will have to drive me to the house," he explained, as he sprung down from the seat. "He may be here, and he may not, and my business with him is such that I must see him within the shortest possible time."

Davy hurried away and pretended to look for a certain person, but at last he came back and resumed his seat on the cab.

"Not here," he said, glancing at the man. "You will have to take me to the same place where you left him the other night."

Just as he expected, Davy got a look, but it did not illustrate him.

"It'll be a double fare for this is business," he remarked at once. "I have to see our friend and you won't regret the service you do us for I know all that is going on—am in the swim as deep as any one, and you know that silence is golden, eh, Jack?"

The driver laughed as the whip cracked over the heads of the team and away they went once more.

Davy Doon was playing a big card and it seemed to be a winner. The next few minutes would tell, however, and he watched the sidewalk as they raced along, fully expecting to encounter a face which he did not care to see.

But nothing broke the monotony of the trip and when the cab entered a certain street with a "Here we are!" from the driver, Davy laid his hand on the man's arm and said softly:

"Not quite to the house, Jack. I don't want to be seen driven right up to the door. Business you understand. You remember the number, of course?"

"Yes. I don't forget such things. It was 96 as I well recall. Are we near enough now?"

"Quite," was the answer. "You want, let me see," and the hand of the boy ferret took from his pocket some silver, two dollars of which he handed to the man and then leaped to the ground.

"This looks like success," he exclaimed. "It was a test-card and it seems to have won. I believe I have found the web that holds Holly Lane!"

He saw the cab turn and go back and in a second he was moving toward 96.

The hour was early enough to excite suspicion among many who saw the boy alight from the cab, but no one seemed to suspect anything and he came down upon the house with confidence.

It was a rather small frame building which had an ancient look and Davy eyed it with a good deal of suspicion as it was closely shuttered and had a silent, deserted look.

Should he go to the door and ring? He caught sight of a curious knocker which seemed to invite his hand, but he resolved to pass it first and take further note of its exterior.

This he did passing it at a slow gait and while he went along he looked up at the house with keen eyes.

"All's quiet there yet," he remarked to himself. "I guess the people haven't got up yet."

When fairly beyond the house Davy was in the act of turning back when a man came toward him and with his eyes riveted upon the boy detective, he continued to approach.

There was something about the man that riveted Davy's attention, and as they met a hand clutched his arm and he was spoken to in a voice that seemed to send a chill to his very bones.

"That was a neat job, but you will come with me. I guess you won't get to play out the hand with the success you have been expecting."

"Jack Jason!" cried the young spotter.

CHAPTER XV.

ACCIDENT AND LUCK.

To be captured the second time by the same hand which once before had nabbed him was not agreeable to Detective Davy's plans. He fell back from the man who had been recognized despite the disguise he had assumed, but the hand did not let him get very far.

"You will come with me. I guess I am able to take care of you. I will see at any rate."

Resistance was uppermost in the boy's mind, but he knew that to resist might make it unpleasant for his future plans so he shut his lips and said nothing.

Jack Jason who had probably penetrated his disguise from the first was overjoyed at his capture and instead of taking the boy to the house in which he believed Holly was a prisoner, he took him round the street where, to Davy's chagrin, he called to the same driver who had brought him to the spot and the man came forward at once.

"Hello! I thought you were 'on business,'" cried the man on the box as his astonishment showed itself in his eyes as he leaned toward the boy.

"He was, but I thought he would like another ride. You will take both of us down-town a piece. I will tell you where when we get near the spot."

All this seemed a dream to the young shadow and when he saw the carriage door shut and found himself cooped up with the sharp eyes of Jack Jason regarding him, he felt for a single moment that the game was nearly played out and that he was the loser.

Away went the cab with the two in it and for some time neither spoke.

"You must have played it fine to get out of the trap," said Jack.

"I had to. You don't suppose I cared to remain there all my life like the man who is there yet?"

Jack turned a trifle pale, but in a second was himself again.

"You will not get to boast of your exploit

very long. In the first place, you are engaged in business sure to get you into trouble and, secondly, you don't have to embark in it."

"Maybe not, but aren't you in business destined to get you into trouble, too?"

Jack smiled and passed his hand over his brow as he seemed to wipe off some drops of sweat.

"Never mind that. We will see that this time you don't escape. You might have kept out of the net—out of the one I had spread for you, I mean—if you had not played this morning's card. It was a fatal one in your career and you will regret it more than any card you have ever played."

Davy said nothing to this and the cab carried them on out of one street and into another until the scene of his first capture was reached.

The Boy Spotter shuddered in spite of his accustomed coolness. He abhorred the thought of going back to keep the skeleton company, but there seemed no help for it. He knew that the driver was in the employ of the conspirators and that he would do their bidding to the last.

As they turned into a street which seemed full of life for the earliness of the hour, they heard a shout and the driver suddenly drew aside and stopped.

"What's the matter?" asked Jack, poking his head out of the window.

"A runaway. Heavens! we are right in the way of the team."

"The deuce, you say! Drive on the sidewalk! Quick, man!"

The horses were started toward the sidewalk as directed, but the driver dropped the lines and with a cry sprung from the box and ran away.

Already Jack Jason had opened the door and was standing on the step undecided. He knew not what to do, but, what he did was done on the spur of the moment.

He saw that a team attached to a large wagon was running off and that it was bearing down upon the cab with the fury of a charge. The horses attached to the carriage realized their danger and had recoiled, but, terror stricken by the danger, they seemed bereft of judgment and breathlessly awaited the collision.

Suddenly crash, crash, came the shock and in another instant the two teams were all together in inextricable confusion.

The collision reminded those who saw it of the meeting of two storm-clouds and for a moment the air was filled with broken bits of vehicle while the crowd which had caught its second breath ran to the spot to rescue the imperiled.

The horses were cut loose and held by strong arms and some one seized Jack Jason and pulled him out from among the ruins of the cab.

He seemed more dead than alive and they placed him on the sidewalk under the trees while the crowd was kept back by those who declared in excited tones that the man must have air.

"There must be another one under the cab," said a man. "I am sure I saw another face at the door just before the teams came together. Look for him under that mass of wheels and you will find him, I am quite sure."

The crowd went to work again and threw aside the broken stuff, but nobody was turned out.

"It's mighty singular," said the positive man. "I have good eyes and certainly saw another person in the cab. Where's the driver? He ought to know whether there were two men or not."

But the cabman was not on hand. He seemed to have been frightened out of his wits, or had gone away to escape censure by the owner of the team.

Meantime the patrol summoned from the nearest box had come to the scene and Jack Jason had been lifted into it and taken to the hospital.

He was unconscious and seemed on the brink of death for his face was white and some bones seemed to be broken.

"That's what I call by the skin of one's teeth," remarked a boy who ten minutes later stood in a room some distance from the scene of the accident. "I wouldn't have given much for my chances when I saw those horses coming down the street like mad. They seemed bent on knocking us all to pieces and when they struck the cab we seemed to be lifted from the street and thrown twenty feet into the air. I wonder how Jack fared? I found myself lying under a wheel and pretty close to a hoof when I picked myself up as the crowd gathered and slipping through like a weasel, I think I got away without being seen. It was too near for me. But

I'm all O. K. now. Only a bruise on my left shin and a scratch on my neck."

He looked to his hurts, thankful that they were no worse and proud of his escape.

The runaway had done him a favor and he did not stop to think how the horses had fared in the catastrophe. It was enough for him to know that he was all right.

An hour later Davy ventured back to the vicinity of the accident to learn that Jack had been taken off more dead than alive and on going to the hospital he heard that the case was very doubtful, as the man was hurt internally and had not recovered consciousness.

"That's bad in one sense," thought Davy.

"Jack by remaining unconscious, won't be able to tell that I was in the cab and if the driver don't come forward with his statement, which I don't think he will do as he wasn't engaged in legitimate cab business, I will be all O. K. anyhow. It was a complete shaking up and Nell will shudder when she hears of it. I think I know what's become of Holly for I was near the web when Jack swooped down upon me like an eagle. Things are coming our way, if they do cause break-ups and runaways."

Davy walked toward his own home and was soon there.

Presently he was startled by a quick knock at the door and ere he could open it it was opened by some one in the hall and Nickel Nell came in.

The face of the girl was pale and seamed with eagerness.

"Well, what do you think, Davy?" she said, as she came forward and took a chair at the table. "You remember Bolivar Brass?"

"Certainly. What's the matter with the old fellow now, Nell?"

"He's dead."

The boy ferret started.

"You don't mean that!" he exclaimed, still eying the girl. "Why, I have discovered that he left his house last night—left it suddenly and for good, I thought."

"But he is dead, all the same. He fell dead on a street corner not two hours ago. I happened to be within half a block of him when the death occurred and when they picked him up I had a good look at his face and recognized him. They say it was heart disease brought on by sudden excitement."

Davy thought a moment before he replied.

"Don't you know, Davy, that that man carried a secret in his bosom?" said the girl, looking at him. "It is a bad death for Mrs. Lane, for she believes that he could tell what Hiram Honeybee knows, but now he never will."

"He never would have told. Bolivar Brass has cheated the gallows or the prison, that's all," smiled the young ferret. "He was on his way to one or both, but dying on the street he has cheated them, I say."

Then Davy related his adventure and with Nell's lips bloodless and her pretty face as white as snow, she said:

"Let us thank heaven for that runaway, Davy. If it had not happened there might have been no escape from the second web of the fortune spiders."

"I guess you're right, Nell; but I'm all O. K. now and ready to wind up the hunt for Hiram Honeybee."

"If he is found all is well; if not the great wrong will never be righted. It seems to me that crime and luck are twin brothers," and with this singular remark Nell became silent.

CHAPTER XVI.

IS IT ANOTHER TRAP?

It was true, as Nickel Nell had informed Davy Doon, that old Bolivar Brass was dead.

Death had come to the man when he was not looking for the shaft and his remains had been taken to the Morgue for want of a better place, for it was not known where he last lived and in all the great city there was not one who came forward to care for the body.

Nell after telling Davy about the sudden death, went home where she expected to find Lucy Lane, the woman with a mission, but upon opening the door she discovered that the room was empty. Mrs. Lane was not to be found, and Nell, perplexed by her absence, waited awhile for her return.

Davy's friend was eager to acquaint her with the tidings of Bolivar's death and wished she would come back, but some hours passed without bringing her in.

By this time the girl began to feel uneasy as she feared something had happened and going forth once more she began to look for the old lady with the cane.

All at once she heard some one talking in a

loud voice and on going round a corner she saw Mrs. Lane in the midst of a small crowd talking in tones which might have been heard half a square distant.

The old lady from Jersey was excited and when Nell came up Mrs. Lane rushed to her saying that she had seen Nat Natty and that she had just given him a piece of her mind.

"I guess he knows how I stand," she said, the flushes of anger still showing in her face. "I told him plainly just how the land lies—that what he has he never came by honestly, and that the will which he presented was a forgery from first to last, and that I believed that he had made way with Hiram Honeybee, the man who signed the first will and who would tell the truth if they had not seen to it that he was placed beyond doing that."

"And what did he say?" inquired Nell.

"Why, he stood the fire for some time smiling in his mean way, but when I double-loaded my guns he fell back not in very good order and at last retreated, leaving the field to me. I gave it to him as well as I could and the folks here heard me."

"She's got a tongue that scorches," put in one of the people, who had lingered. "I never heard anything like it."

"You would hear more if you will set him before me again. I am ready to meet the villain anywhere. Perhaps we can't prove just now all that I said, but the time is coming when we will do that and more, too, and when the door of some prison will open to take in three of the greatest rascals this city ever harbored."

"I'm afraid they won't take in one of the three," said Nell, in a low voice, as she took hold of Mrs. Lane and pulled her gently from the scene.

"You don't? Why not, child?"

"Because Bolivar Brass is dead."

In an instant Mrs. Lane fell back and gave the girl a sharp stare.

"Dead? No, he can't be dead!"

"Yes, but he is. He fell dead on the street not long ago."

"What have they done with him?"

"The body has been taken to the Morgue."

"And his personal effects?"

"I suppose they were taken there, too."

"We must see."

It was curious to see Mrs. Lane and Nell enter the somber house of the dead and inquire after the effects found with the man who had fallen dead at a certain corner.

They were shown a small black valise which he was carrying at the time and were permitted to look at its contents.

"These amount to nothing," remarked Lucy Lane, looking up at Nell who had watched her closely. "I don't find anything here that unites him to the fight I am making. He may have left the papers where he lived. We must find out where that is."

While they walked from the Morgue Nell related the story she had heard from Davy's lips.

"All that is very strange," said the old lady. "Look you, Nell. The boy made the narrowest escape of his life when he got out of the wreck of the vehicle. He was on his way to a trap from which I believe there would have been no rescue at all. It was very close. Do you think Jack Jason now at the hospital could be induced to tell anything? He certainly knows something about the plot."

Nickel Nell slowly shook her head.

"I think Davy will find out all there is to be known," she replied. "His blood is hot now and he won't stop till he is at the end of the trail. He saw a strange man rob Bolivar Brass and when he has found him he will have solved a full chapter of the mystery."

"Nell, I believe that man to have been Hiram Honeybee."

"Then, if he is alive and has the papers telling the truth and showing up the fraud, why don't he come forward with them and help us right this wrong?"

"I don't know, child. It is very dark. After all he may not be Hiram Honeybee. It seems to be darker than it was some time back. We have lost Holly, but, as you say, Davy will look for her and he may be on the right trail. Let us hope he is. One of these days there must be a terrible reckoning. We must come out of this with victory on our banners. I feel it, Nell."

"So do I!" enthusiastically cried the girl. "Of course Bolivar Brass will never talk and we can't look to him for an explanation, and Jack Jason may die at the hospital."

"That leaves but one of the three human spiders who sucked the blood of the estate. Nat

Natty who puts on style while he spends the money of others is the greatest leech of all. Why, he never changed color while I berated him and if he had come within reach of me I would have written my autograph on his face with this cane of mine. I will yet if he ever crosses my path again."

"You told me once that you didn't believe he is your nephew, but an impostor who played the hand for all it was worth. Are you still of the same opinion?"

"I am. I believe that my nephew died and that this man is a vile rascal who has no right to the name. But what puzzled us in court at the time, he told of many things which none but our nephew could have known, still, for all that, I believe him to be a cheat. It was a pity we couldn't prove it, though, for by that failure we lost the case. Of course we all feel that the will presented was a fraud, that the true one was signed by Hiram Honeybee while the signature to the other was a forgery."

They were near Nell's home by this time and soon afterward ascended to the rooms.

On the table they found a letter addressed to Mrs. Lucy Lane which the old lady picked up and handed to the girl.

"There are no secrets between us," she said with a smile. "You shall read the letter, Nell."

Nickel Nell opened the letter and after a glance over the sheet started and looked at Mrs. Lane.

"What is it, child?"

"It is a letter asking you to meet the writer to-night."

"Asking me to meet some one?" was the sudden echo. "I can't understand that. But read it out."

"MRS. LUCY LANE.

"Will you meet the writer to-night, say at nine at 876 — street, near Gotham Court? I will then and there communicate something of the deepest importance to your interest and I trust you will keep this a profound secret and be on hand. You will run no risks though the spot isn't a paradise. We can't always meet where we would prefer. Please come to No. 876 if you would hear something decidedly to your advantage. If you wish to continue a useless fight remain away and burn this letter."

"ONE WHO KNOWS SOMETHING."

"That's a pretty bad spot," said Nell when she looked up into Mrs. Lane's face after reading the letter.

"I believe I have heard you say as much before, Nell. Would you go?"

Nickel Nell hesitated a moment and then replied.

"Already the secret of this letter belongs to two of us. I see no harm in sharing it with a third."

"You mean with Davy?"

"Yes."

"I am quite ready to go alone to the place and meet the writer. It is a scrawl and unlike any writing I ever seen. But stop! There is a resemblance between some of the letters and some I have been keeping for several years."

Mrs. Lane went to a bed in one corner and reaching beneath the mattress took out a black pocketbook which she opened as she came toward Nell.

"I will show you this and let you do your own comparing," she went on and Nell was handed a letter which had been taken from the pocketbook.

The girl bent forward and began to read it with interest.

"This is from Hiram Honeybee!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, he wrote that. I found it among my husband's papers and have preserved it hoping that some day it would be of service to me in my hunt. Don't you think some of the letters in both communications are similar in shape and looks?"

"They are! they are!" shouted the fair girl.

"Mrs. Lane, I believe the same hand penned both."

"It would be strange if that were true, now wouldn't it?" cried Mrs. Lane. "If I thought that Hiram Honeybee was at 876 I would wade through fire and blood to meet him. I am going anyhow. You need not tell Davy."

In another moment Nell had handed back the letters and seemed to be wondering what would be the outcome of the proposed meeting near Gotham Court.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LAST OF THE TRIO.

ANOTHER night has thrown its vail over the city between the two rivers.

The hour is not late and the streets are thronged with people.

Here and there crowds are moving under the brilliant lights elbowing one another as in the hurried march of business all seem bent on the distancing of each other and getting the most gold.

In a handsome house up-town, under a light that swings gently over the square table, sits a man who on more than one occasion has appeared on the chess-board of our tale.

His surroundings betoken wealth and he looks at peace with all mankind as he sends a puff of white smoke above his head and seems to enjoy life to its full.

Nat Natty was rich.

It was known to many that he had won a celebrated will contest over in Jersey, that he had received as his share of the fight more than a cool two hundred thousand and that the lawyers in the case had also enriched themselves.

But the fight had been forgotten and there were few who could have told the name of the estate, much less recall any of the numerous incidents of the legal battle.

Nat Natty had a good many acquaintances, but very few close friends.

He was not the man who makes friends, preferring to wrap himself up in his own personality.

He occupied the large house alone, with the exception of several servants who were not there all the time. When they were wanted they were present and when their work was done they were permitted to enjoy themselves as they saw proper.

Natty, well dressed as he always was, was on this occasion arrayed in the same garments in which he had faced Mrs. Lane on the street but a few hours before.

Perhaps the recollection of that little encounter in which he had been worsted so far as tongue was concerned, came back to him as he sat alone in the room, for now and then he smiled as he smoked and sent to the ceiling the white wreaths that lost themselves there.

"I didn't care to have much of a scene, but I wanted to draw her out which I did to perfection," he said aloud. "I don't consider her very dangerous, though the gift of speech which she has is not an inferior one. She has changed some, has this woman, whom I faced in the Jersey court several years ago and worsted. She looks older and the bootless hunt which she has inaugurated has told on her. She is losing her mind, for now and then she repeated herself and toward the end of the tirade raved like a maniac. She won't last very long at this rate. I will soon have her out of my way and that without having to appear against her again."

Do you really think so, Nat Natty?

Are you sure Mrs. Lane is wearing herself out and that you will win the victory in the end and get to keep the spoil which has done you so much good in a certain way?

"That was bad for Bolivar, but not so bad for us," he went on with a cynical smile.

"He fell dead on the street and they didn't find anything of a criminative nature on his person. I wonder where he hid his papers? If I thought I could find them I would go out and look now, but I will leave the matter with Jack when he turns up. I wonder where Jack is? He should have been here before this. The girl whom he caught at the ferry must think she is very deep in the web. I would like to see her for myself. I wonder if I could play a good card and withstand her blandishments by dropping in upon her right now?"

After some deliberation he rose and looked at himself in the glass.

The inspection must have been satisfactory, for after awhile he went out, locking the door behind him.

"I will play the hand that suits me best," he went on. "I haven't met her since I saw her at the trial and she may have forgotten my face."

In a few minutes he was in another part of the city and rung a door-bell there. The door was opened by a woman who bowed to him as he stepped into the hall and, after a question, assured him that "the young lady" would be found up-stairs first door to the right.

Mr. Natty went up the poorly-carpeted steps and knocked, but no answer was received.

He knocked again with a little more emphasis but received the same retort—silence.

Then he laid his hand on the knob and the door opened.

He stood in an empty room.

"Empty? This is very strange," he exclaimed. "The lady down-stairs told me I would find her here, but I see no one."

He turned and went down the steps.

"You were mistaken. The room is empty," he said to the woman who came from a lower room.

"Impossible!"

"Go up and see."

A search told that Nat had spoken the truth and for a full minute the woman stood in the room perplexed and pale.

"Maybe Jack came and took her away," suggested Nat.

"He hasn't been here. What, don't you know what happened to-day?"

"To Jack?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"He was badly hurt in a runaway. He was thrown out of a cab which collided with a runaway team and is now at Bellevue Hospital."

This news seemed to paralyze Nat. He looked incredulously at the woman and then said:

"All this is news to me. I haven't heard a word of it."

"I thought you would be the first person to know of it. They don't think he will live through the night."

"Is he conscious?"

"He hasn't been since the accident."

A singular light seemed to leap up in the man's eyes! It was as if he was glad it was so for he turned away and shut his hands as he looked toward the door and saying something which the woman did not understand, passed out.

In the open air he stopped and seemed to study.

"In the hospital and dying? One dead already and the other nearly so? Things may be coming my way after all."

With this he started off and in a little while was out of sight.

Half an hour later he turned up again, not at the doors of Bellevue Hospital, but in his own parlor and at his own table.

"I don't see how I can suffer much by the death of Jack," he muttered. "If he would oblige me by dying without talking he would be of great service to me at the close of his life. I can face this mad woman and the girl, too, and keep what I've won. Yes, I can do that."

He was talking thus to himself when his door opened and a servant who had come home during his brief absence came in.

"What is it, Hervery?"

Hervery, who was a man with a youthful face and easy tread, came on and leaning toward Nat with one hand resting on the table, said in low voice:

"A man was here to see you awhile ago."

"What was he like?"

"He was about the queerest looking man I ever saw. He was rather tall with wild eyes that were as restless as a dervish, and while he talked he kept wringing his fingers round each other like I never saw a man do before."

Nat Natty seemed to lose breath. He turned pale. This description of his caller seemed to be too much for him.

"What did he want, Hervery? You asked him of course."

"He said he wanted to pay a debt. He has the document, the right one he said, and he wanted to settle an old score which has been running for more than three years."

"He said that, did he?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll see him later. That's all. Good-night, Hervery."

The servant walked out, but Natty sat rigid in the chair staring at the door as if he expected to see that visitor come back.

"I know him," his lips said. "I know this terrible creature. He said he would come back no matter where we sent him. He has kept his word. That man wasn't flesh and blood. He was Hiram Honeybee only in name, but he wasn't living. He was the ghost of the man who is hunted for by Lucy Lane."

He rose and crossed the room. Passing upstairs he remained away for twenty minutes when he came back and sat down again.

An hour passed.

When Hervery came back to the parlor, having heard a strange noise there, he found it empty and the gas turned low.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EVERYTHING "O. K."

DAVY DOON, the young detective, was still on the trail which since his adventure in the cab had taken a strange turn.

By the merest chance he had caught sight of a

fitting figure which had a familiar look and the longer he watched it the more he believed that he was on the track of the man who had robbed Bolivar Brass of the important papers.

He tracked this person down through the dark shades of more than one street and lost him near Captain Paul's den near Gotham Court.

"That is the man; there can be no mistake," remarked the boy, and as he turned at the sound of a脚步声 he saw before him a woman at whom he sprung with the quickness of a cat.

He was looking into the eyes of Mrs. Lane, and when the old lady recognized the lad she turned white, and looked at him, unable for a moment to speak.

"You must not be seen in this part of the city at this hour," cried the boy.

"Ay, but I must, Davy. You don't know what brings me to this spot. The letter that came mysteriously to my table brings me here and I believe I am to meet the man we have hunted these long years—Hiram Honeybee."

The letter was produced and the boy detective read it in the light that fell from a window in the alley.

"Come! We will see this man together," said he when he turned to her, handing back the letter. "I now believe the man I shadowed to this place awhile ago is the same person. If he isn't Hiram Honeybee, then that man is as dead as a herring."

They went in, passing through the shades that grew black as they advanced, and at last Davy opened the latch of the low door which had on many an occasion opened to Captain Paul; then he and Mrs. Lane went inside.

Darkness greeted them, and a clock some distance from the place began to strike nine. A door was heard to swing open in the gloom and some one called out:

"Are you here?"

"I have come," replied Lucy Lane. "I am here in answer to the letter you sent."

"I thought you would come. I have been waiting. Be surprised at nothing. I will strike a light."

The flame of a match leaped into being along the wall and the next moment the woman from Jersey leaned forward and then uttered a cry which rung through the old trap.

A man stood before Davy and Mrs. Lane—a man who looked haggard and thin, but the eyes were bright and the hands long and skeleton-like.

He had not seen the boy shadow.

"I need not ask whether you recognize me or not," he went on. "I am Hiram Honeybee. Your young detective has not found me. I believe he has no idea where I am."

"I see you now. I have tracked you through shadow and sunlight, I have of late followed you from pillar to post, Hiram Honeybee. I saw you rob old Bolivar Brass and—"

"You saw my trick that time, did you?" laughed the man in the light. "It was a pretty one, eh? Well, I had to do something to get even. I never saw a crime that did not blunder. Why, what do you think the old curmudgeon did, Mrs. Lane?"

The woman was speechless, and the young ferret looked at the man as he ran his hand into his bosom and drew out a paper which he held up in the light.

"Why, instead of destroying the will which the rascals stole so that they might copy the handwriting and forge the names on it, he kept it—Heaven knows what for. I believe he was holding it for a purpose. I believe that he would have used it as a club on the man who calls himself Nat Natty when that villain failed to be bled by him any longer. This is the will."

"The will?" cried Lucy Lane, springing forward, but the man waved her off as he went on.

"You don't get to touch it yet," he said. "I shall keep it till I can show it to the man who profited by the fight—the rascal who to this day believes that it was burned by Bolivar Brass, the legal brains of the fraud. He stayed in the background but he conducted the villainy, conducted it from this city. He is dead now, and the other one lies in the hospital dying. But one is left and he is the greatest scoundrel of them all. He is the man who got the money and who swore to a tissue of lies in open court. I shall show him this will. I will stand up before him and tell him that Hiram Honeybee is found at last—that the man who was decoyed to this city three years ago for a purpose still lives though he was for awhile among the rats and wrote his name on the wall and left behind him a few papers which were intended to tell those who came after him, if he died there, that he was Hiram Honeybee, the victim of the plot."

"But I escaped. I left behind me those

papers, which, I presume, moldered in the dark and which kept the unknown man company."

"The unknown man?" echoed Davy. "Was the underground chamber tenanted when you were there?"

"There was a skeleton in the darkness when I was placed there. It is there yet, I suppose, but I am here. Now let me thrust this will into Nat Natty's face!"

Hiram Honeybee had been found!

Mrs. Lane sprung forward and looked into the pinched face a few moments, and then turning to the boy ferret, she cried out:

"There is no fraud here! This is the true Hiram Honeybee. It is the missing witness!"

"But 'missing' no longer, thank Heaven! I have bided my time. I felt it would come. Now, let me see the man—the last of the three."

It is the bright morning of another day.

The door of the elegant house occupied so long by Nat Natty stands wide and a policeman is seen walking back and forth in the hall.

What has occurred?

Davy Doon, the Boy Spotter, stands near the table in the parlor and a man who is seated in the chair near by with something at his wrists that reflects back the light of the sun, looks at another person who has taken up his station over against the wall, from whence he is looking at the occupant of the chair with a triumphant smile.

"I want to show this to you, Mr. Nat," this person says, breaking away and coming forward. "Perhaps you have seen it before. Don't you think it a little strange that Old Brass didn't burn it? You thought he did, no doubt, but here it is—the will with the name of Hiram Honeybee attached in his own handwriting. It never passed out of the old fellow's hands, but he kept it until I relieved him of it one night, as that boy yonder will tell you if you ask him."

Nat Natty looks at the detective, but asks no questions.

He realizes that the game is at an end.

Nat Natty reflected over the past in a felon's cell long before the sun went down.

He heard while he reflected that the patient of Bellevue Hospital was dead, and he knew that the stern hand of justice was about to close on him through the testimony of Hiram Honeybee and the work of Detective Davy.

Holly Lane, whose escape from the house to which she had been taken by Jack Jason from the ferry we have noted, turned up soon afterward and by the merest chance ran across Nickel Nell who escorted her in triumph home where there was a happy reunion between her and Mrs. Lane.

Time came when the man who had profited by the greatest bit of villainy ever perpetrated against an old lady and a fair young girl, received the full sentence of the law and, stripped by his disguises, for he was an impostor and not the real nephew, Nat Natty went from the cell in the Tombs to Sing Sing.

Then everything hidden came out and the world knew that the will which had won the Jersey contest was a fraudulent one, that the signature had been forged by Jack Jason, while Bolivar Brass engineered the contest and Nat Natty was put forward as the rightful heir.

Hiram Honeybee, whose story was enough to settle the whole matter, for he witnessed the true document which was produced in court and proven to be the right one, produced a profound impression, and a cheer that shook the old building greeted the righteous decision.

"We owe this to you," said Mrs. Lane, taking Davy's hands. "But for you we would not have succeeded and—"

"I guess you owe a little to that man," was the reply and the Boy Spotter pointed at Hiram Honeybee who was being congratulated by old friends. "Tis true that I ferreted him out, but what if he had sealed his lips?"

In course of time Holly, now an heiress, found a lover, and rumor says that in the near future she will fit out a young married couple whose names are Nell and Davy.

"It's all right at last," says Davy. "Hiram Honeybee is found, old Mrs. Lane is happy, and Holly is the nicest young lady in this broad land. And, best of all, Nell is getting prettier every day and I'm all O. K."

THE END.

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